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INSIDE

BUSINESS



Legal recreational pot industry opens in Colorado. ➤ **PAGE 17**

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A big winter storm is bearing down on the U.S. northeast.

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WORLD



The UN says violence claimed the lives of 7,818 civilians in Iraq in 2013. ➤ **PAGE 20**

NMI net deficit at \$1.366M

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
haidee_eugenio@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

The good news is that the CNMI government collected \$2.569 million more than the \$114.32 million in revenues it projected for fiscal year 2013, buoyed by a steady increase in tourist arrivals. The bad news is that total spending exceeded appropriations by \$3.761 million, mainly because of utility charges, medical referrals, and public safety costs.

See DEFICIT on Page 4

» \$2.569M in excess of projected revenues, but overspending at \$3.761M

5 things that could make or break CNMI in 2014

By HAIDEE V. EUGENIO
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REPORTER

At least five major events could make or break the CNMI in 2014, starting with whether the Commonwealth will be allowed to keep its over 10,000 legal foreign workers beyond Dec. 31, 2014, at a time when the tourism-based econ-

omy is surging after years of lackluster performance.

This is coupled with the issue of whether or not the CNMI could also hold on to its long-term foreign investors with E2-C permits beyond 2014.

While Delegate Gregorio Kilili C. Sablan (Ind-MP) has reason to be-

See 5 THINGS on Page 4

CUC to soon issue RFPs for renewable energy

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
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REPORTER

The Commonwealth Utilities Corp. will soon start the ball rolling on the much-awaited renewable energy plan for the CNMI.

CUC executive director Alan Fletcher disclosed yesterday that the agency is poised to issue two requests for proposals, or RFPs, to help the islands move toward renewable energy. These two proposals are for geothermal exploration and for the integrated resource planning, which will focus on developing new energy sources for the Commonwealth.

These comes after the recent release of the results of the "Renewable Energy Integration Study," which identified the type of alternative energy sources that can be reliably integrated into the Saipan electrical grid.

Fletcher said that looking for new energy sources and developing a plan that would be supported by stakeholders is the next step.

He said the geothermal project and the integrated resource plan and energy supply analysis will be funded by grants CUC received from the Department of the Interior's Office of Insular Affairs.

See CUC on Page 4

New Year baby gets gifts from MARPAC



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left, MARPAC sales representatives Chris Nuñez and Jed Zapanta, Marpac administrative assistant Michelle Villacrusis, Marpac sales representative Shirley Santos, MARPAC consumer sales manager Tom Basa, Nenita Annie Rose Romolor, Caridad Saures-Kaipat, Jerry Muña, and MARPAC sales representative Bradley Babauta pose with 2014 New Year baby Ilia'mae Muña and her proud parents, Jerry Muña and Nenita Annie Rose Romolor, at the Commonwealth Health Center.

The parents of Saipan's New Year baby have more reason to smile this extended holiday season after MARPAC showered Ilia'mae Muña with an assortment of gifts that include Huggies, Enfamil, and Kotex products.

There were actually quite a few babies delivered on Jan. 1, 2014. How-

ever Ilia'mae Muña was the very first baby to come into this world on 2014 and MARPAC was more than happy to share its blessings with the newborn.

The island's New Year baby was born at 8:13am in the morning of Jan. 1, 2014, to first-time parents Jerry Muña and Nenita Annie Rose Romolor.

Ilia'mae Muña was delivered by Dr. Weimer and she weighed 8 lbs and was 35 cm long at birth.

Her parents are both 18 years old and are graduating seniors at Saipan Southern High and Kagman High School.

Ilia'mae Muña is also Caridad

See BABY on Page 4

Man injured in Garapan knife attack. PAGE 6
Saipan hotels light up the sky in countdown. PAGE 7



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Authorization letters no longer honored for non-emergencies

By MONETH G. DEPOSA
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Private sector employees who used to avail of hospital services for non-emergency cases using just authorization letters from their employers can no longer do so unless they are insured or pay upfront following the Commonwealth Healthcare Corp.'s decision to strictly enforce its payment policy.

Interim corporation CEO Esther Muña confirmed with *Saipan Tribune* that since the enactment of the local law that freed employers from providing mandatory insurance coverage for their employees, the hospital has been implementing upfront payment for non-acute treatment—unless the patient's company enters into a prior arrangement with the hospital.

Muña made this clarification following information that an employee of a private company was refused service at the Commonwealth Health Center last week for failing to pay upfront. The patient, it was learned, just had an authorization letter from the company expressing willingness to be billed for the patient's charges.

"This has been the hospital policy: all companies should be treated the same way we treat our self-pay patients who come in, see their physicians, and pay for the services rendered," said Muña.

She said CHC no longer accepts or honors authorization slips and recommendation letters for non-emergency cases.

She, however, emphasized that the hospital will waive this rule of requiring upfront payments in emergency and acute cases.

"If it's not an emergency case, they [companies] can first arrange a payment arrangement with the hospital and we're doing that," she told *Saipan Tribune*.

According to Muna, the hospital has been suffering for many years as a result of uncollected charge accounts, resulting in inadequate funding to meet the hospital's operational needs such as supplies and equipment.

"When you go to a hotel, you check out and you pay. Why is it not the same for the hospital? Why is CHC forced to wait to be reimbursed for services we provide?" she asked.

Muña said the public hospital is not trying to chase away patients, because it attends to every immediate case that comes its way. However, she said that for non-emergency treatment, there has to be some responsibility to fulfill. Non-emergency treatment, she said, can be planned.

"For non-emergency, everybody needs to pay upfront but if it's an emergency and acute cases, patients can be billed and that's always been the practice. So for uninsured patients, they should be treated the same way we treat the self-pay," she said.

According to Muña, there are some companies that take advantage of the billing system of the hospital. "What's stopping the companies from insuring their employees? Because they don't want to pay the premium," she said, adding that CHCC will not provide "special treatment" for non-emergency patients.

"Some companies think that they can just authorize a payment [for their employees' medical bills] by issuing an authorization or recommendation. My question is: Why issue an authorization instead of a check?" asked Muña.

CHCC is an autonomous agency that heavily relies on its revenue to continue operating. Its income is sourced from reimbursements from federally-funded Medicare and Medicaid clients and self-paying patients.

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Two ink plea deal in poaching of fruit bats case

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
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REPORTER

Former Rota customs officer Albert A. Taitano and former Division of Fish and Wildlife staff David A. Santos are expected to appear in federal court today for a change of plea hearing in connection with charges of conspiring to poach a breeding colony of Mariana fruit bats in 2008.

The trial in this case is supposed to start on Jan. 13, 2014, but the two, together with their respective counsels, entered a plea deal with the U.S. government.

Probable cause is found to charge waiter in rape case

Superior Court Associate Judge Teresa K. Kim-Tenorio has found probable cause to charge a waiter who is accused of raping a woman four times, including at knife point, and of threatening to kill the victim and her husband.

In her first preliminary hearing on Tuesday, the newly-sworn judge found probable cause to charge 42-year-old Abu Yousuf with four counts of sexual assault in the first degree, two counts of assault with a dangerous weapon, one count of stalking in the second degree, one count of assault and battery, five counts of burglary, one count of theft, and three counts of disturbing the peace.

Kim-Tenorio, however, found

Assistant U.S. attorney Garth R. Backe on Tuesday informed the court about the plea deal. U.S. District Court for the NMI Chief Judge Ramona V. Manglona set the change of plea hearing for today, Friday, at 1:30pm.

Taitano and Santos were indicted in 2011 with retired police lieutenant Adrian Mendiola for the same alleged poaching incident in 2008.

Only Mendiola's jury trial pushed through in May 2011 in federal court. Jurors found Mendiola guilty of unlawful

possession of a threatened wildlife but not guilty of unlawful receipt or acquisition of threatened wildlife.

The court dismissed the charges against Taitano and Santos without prejudice at the prosecution's request.

In October 2012, the U.S. government refiled the charges against Taitano and Mendiola. The indictment charged them with conspiring to unlawfully take a threatened species and one count of taking a threatened

species.

On April 13, 2013, the U.S. government filed a superseding indictment, charging Taitano and Mendiola with conspiring to unlawfully take and transport

a threatened species, taking a threatened species, and transporting a threatened species taken in violation of law.

The U.S. government also seeks the forfeiture of the defen-

dants' shotguns.

According to the indictment, Taitano and Santos went to a land claimed by the Ogo family to hunt Mariana fruit bats on Nov. 1, 2008, on Rota.

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Inos vetoes anti-price gouging local bill

Gov. Eloy S. Inos vetoed Tuesday an anti-price gouging bill for Rota, saying there are already laws in place to prevent price gouging in the entire CNMI when there is a sudden increase in demand or a decrease in supply due to an emergency or disaster.

Inos, however, said he completely agrees with House Local Bill 18-18, Substitute 1's goal of prohibiting price-gouging on Rota during a state of emergency or disaster.

"I have carefully considered the intent and structure of HLB 18-18, S1 and have decided to veto this legislation," the governor said in his message to Rota Legislative Delegation chair Rep. Teresita Santos (R-Rota) and House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero (Ind-Saipan).

The governor also said the enforcement and penalty provisions in the Disaster Price Freeze Act of 1996 and the Consumer Protection Act are superior to those proposed in HLB 18-18, S1 "and will therefore better prevent inappropriate and unlawful increases in the prices of consumer products on any basis caused by a natural disaster or other emergency situation."

Inos said these existing CNMI-wide prohibitions against price-gouging include any such transactions that would happen on Rota and therefore the proper enforcement of existing laws will better prevent illegal pricing of consumer products caused by a natural disaster or other emergency situations. (Haidee V. Eugenio)

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Tinian resident wins 55" LG TV in SCS raffle

By MARK RABAGO
mark_rabago@saipantribune.com
ASSOCIATE EDITOR

Marilyn "Jackie" Mendiola won the grand prize in Saipan Computer Services, Inc.'s 2013 Customer Appreciation Raffle, the drawing of which was held yesterday at the computer store's office along Beach Road, Garapan.

The grand prize is an LG 55" Full HD 1080p LED Smart TV. Enhancing the home theater experience is a Triple XD, TruMotion, Dolby Digital, WiFi, and 2.0 Channel Sound Bar.

Mendiola, who is a regular customer, bought an Asus Notebook, an Asus Memo Pad, flash drive, and other miscellaneous items worth more than \$1,200 late last year. Her purchase gave her 48 entries to the yearend raffle that gives a raffle ticket for every \$25 purchase.

In all, close to 3,000 entries qualified for the raffle,

said SCS, Inc. staff Grace Delos Santos.

SCS, Inc. general manager

Jerry Tiu said the 2013 Customer Appreciation Raffle started a couple of weeks before

Thanksgiving and the prizes are even bigger this year compared to 2012, with more than \$8,000



Saipan Computer Services, Inc. general manager Jerry Tiu and his wife Kazuko, company managing director, pose with staff, Burger & Comer's Gary Bernardo, and KZMI's Bob Webb after the company's 2013 Customer Appreciation Raffle drawing yesterday. In front of them are the \$8,000 worth of prizes they gave away.

CUC

From Page 1

"Available information suggests that the geothermal gradient beneath Saipan may be sufficiently steep to provide geothermal energy to generate electricity. To address this potential, CUC is soliciting proposals from qualified firms to collect and evaluate scientific data to better determine the potential for development of geothermal energy on Saipan," according to Fletcher.

He said the technical complexity of this project and the need to collect and evaluate extensive

data will require the successful proposer to provide expertise in various professional disciplines, conduct exploratory drilling, and provide equipment and materials necessary to complete the work.

The "Integrated Resource Plan" or IRP will help to create a "roadmap" for developing new energy supplies in CNMI. Generally, Fletcher said, the IRP will develop strategies of how the CNMI can reduce fossil fuel dependency, while providing reliable generation and distribution at the least cost possible for consumers.

"Developing new power generation sources is a major undertaking and can take many

years to implement. Due to the immense cost of new energy sources and long-term rate implications to consumers, exceptional care must be taken in identifying new energy sources. Equally important, is to stop the 'crisis management' of energy supplies by having one predictable strategy to pursue," he said.

The first task of the IRP is to set up an independent third-party technical review, selection, and advisory process for soliciting a new energy source.

"As many are aware, the CNMI is approached numerous times each year by sales teams claiming to have developed the ultimate energy

solution for the CNMI. While many of these solutions appear feasible, the utility remains committed to ensuring that the people of the CNMI do not invest in a system that fails to deliver reliable power or ends up costing more than promised. Using independent third-party technical and economic expertise to advise the community in selecting a new energy source is thought to be the most efficient way to ensure a fair, open, and competitive procurement as well as gain acceptance by consumers, business community, and government stakeholders," he said.

DEFICIT

From Page 1

"The effect of both revenues and expenditures produced a net deficit of \$1,366,369 for the fiscal year," Gov. Eloy S. Inos said in his Dec. 31 annual financial report for fiscal year 2013 to the Legislature, a copy of which was obtained yesterday.

Fiscal year 2013 is from Oct. 1, 2012, to Sept. 30, 2013.

If it's any consolation, the net deficit of \$1.366 million in fiscal 2013 is far below the annual figures recorded in recent years.

For example, in fiscal 2011 under the Fitial administration, the net deficit was \$25.8 million. In fiscal 2010, the net deficit was \$18.586 million.

Inos, marking his 11th month as governor, said the CNMI "continues to show signs of recovery, as evidenced by the increases in business gross receipts."

The governor asked for the Legislature's continued assistance and support "as we continue to provide essential government services despite severely limited resources."

Lawmakers, as of yesterday, have yet to review the governor's report.

While the government's actual revenues were more than it projected, the difference was no match for the government's growing obligations.

For example, the government has to come up with at least \$19 million to cover a shortfall in obligations to the Retirement Fund settlement account and health and life insurance.

Moreover, the fiscal year 2014 budget of \$123 million is still among the lowest in a 25-year period in the CNMI.

Delegate Gregorio Kili C. Sablan (Ind-MP), meanwhile, inserted in a U.S. Senate committee-approved bill, S. 1237, a provision that helps U.S. territories such as the CNMI improve their annual revenue estimates to avoid incurring deficits.

Revenues

The governor, in his financial report, said revenue collections and other financing sources recorded for the year—excluding those reserved for debt service and "transfers out"—totaled over \$137.233 million or \$5.184 million more than projected.

Business gross revenue tax showed a \$2.2 million over-projection or 1.86 million over the previous year. Actual BGR in fiscal 2013 was \$59.4 mil-

lion, compared to the estimate of \$57.2 million.

Wage and salary taxes, however, fell by \$4.176 million—from an estimate of \$25.5 million to actual revenue of \$21.323 million.

Personal income tax collection also fell by \$2.889 million, while corporate income taxes increased by \$1.256 million.

"Overall collection of income taxes in the Commonwealth totaled \$90,243,023 with strong collections in the BGRT category, reducing the impact of the shortfalls in this revenue category to \$3,256,977. Favorable collections are reported in all other tax categories," the governor told the Legislature.

The CNMI also exceeded its excise tax projections by 27 percent, collecting a total of over \$21.323 million. This resulted in a surplus of over \$4.523 million.

Hotel occupancy taxes also showed a significant increase with collection of over \$8.519 million, which was \$3.049 million more than anticipated.

License and fee collections totaled over \$7.242 million, which was \$177,335 less than projected.

Charges for services and other revenue also fell short of projections by \$238,584 with a

total collection of \$2.45 million.

Other revenue collections of \$899,125 also fell short of projections by \$109,875.

Spending

Total expenditures and obligations for fiscal 2013 exceeded total appropriations and allotments by \$3.935 million.

The budget allotment was over \$113.876 million but actual spending was more than \$117.812 million.

Total personnel spending reflects a surplus in budget allotments by over \$1.129 million, while total expenditures and obligations under "all others" category exceeded appropriations by over \$5.065 million, resulting in a net overexpenditure/overobligation of over \$3.935 million.

"The majority of the over-expenditure for the fiscal year is attributed to excessive prior year and current year utility charges, unbudgeted costs for Medical Referral, and overexpenditure in operations for the Department of Public Safety," Inos told lawmakers.

For utility costs alone, the budget allotment was over \$6.061 million but actual budgetary basis was over \$9.838 million.

worth of prizes given away

"This is an appreciation raffle for our customers for their support. It's an indication that we see how much support we're getting from the CNMI. This is support from all sectors, both private and public sectors—businesses and the government."

Other lucky customers of SCS, Inc. also won big-ticket items at the raffle.

Winning the first prize—an Acer Aio Desktop PC—is Edeng Siruma, who coincidentally also won for herself the fifth prize of 2TB External HD.

The second prize of a Canon Rebel SLR camera went to Wilmer Sablan, who also won the consolation prize of a Duo Pinball and SCS, Inc. T-shirt.

Other major winners include: DeeDee Towai, third prize (Apple iPad Air); Divina C. DL Cruz, fourth prize (Acer 11" LED netbook); Gregorio R. Camacho, sixth prize (Sam-

sung digital camera); Dr. Eagle Oden, seventh prize (Asus Memor Pad 7"); and Rodney Castro, eighth prize (HP Deskjet D1000 printer).

SCS, Inc. also gave away five minor prizes of a 16GB USB flash drive and 15 consolation prizes of a Duo Pinball and SCS, Inc. T-shirt.

Aside from Tiu, his wife Kazuko, and other SCS, Inc. staff, Burger & Comer auditor Gary Bernardo and KZMI's Bob Webb were also present during the raffle drawing. The former validated the raffle winners.

Tiu congratulated all the winners and reflected a little about how business was steady for SCS, Inc. in the past year.

"We do understand the difficulty posed by the economy, by the ups and down of so many things that affect us. We also see there is continuous support and patronage. To us that basically validates our motto, which is 'Service Beyond the Sale,'" he said.

BABY

From Page 1

Saures-Kaipat's first granddaughter.

The new parents were thankful to MARPAC for visiting and donating gifts to Ilia'mae Muña yesterday morning at the Commonwealth Health Center.

The gifts given to the 2014 New Year baby include Huggies Newborn Diapers, Huggies Baby Wipes, Kotex Overnights, Enfa-

mil Newborn Formula, Huggies bibs, and shirts for the family, etc.

MARPAC consumer sales manager Tom Basa Jr. congratulated the proud parents and grandparents on the safe arrival of their newest family member.

"On behalf of the Marpac Consumer Department we'd like to congratulate the first baby born of 2014. We wish the parents and the baby a bright future and look forward to doing this again for the 2015 CNMI New Year Baby." (Mark Rabago)

5 THINGS

From Page 1

lieve that U.S. Labor Secretary Thomas Perez's anticipated decision this month would be to extend the transitional Commonwealth-only worker program, employers and employees are still wary without the actual decision.

The results of the November 2014 general elections would be a political game changer, especially because Gov. Eloy S. Inos' seat is at stake and CNMI voters will elect for the first time their attorney general.

Inos is the first in CNMI history to become governor by rule of succession after former governor Benigno R. Fitial resigned days before the start of his impeachment trial at the Senate. Fitial was impeached by the House on 18 charges of corruption, neglect of duty and felony. "I believe that my administration has done tremendously since February, when I came in and succeeded former governor Benigno Fitial," Inos told *Saipan Tribune*.

To date, Inos is the only one to announce his plan to run as governor in November under the reorganized Republican Party. His running mate is Senate President Ralph Torres (R-Saipan).

Former speaker Heinz S. Hofschneider has started knocking on peoples' doors for support and has been seeking a running

mate but has yet to announce his intention to run as governor.

Third, 2014 will be the first year the CNMI government is required to remit to the Retirement Fund settlement fund \$25 million related to retiree Betty Johnson's lawsuit.

The fiscal year 2014 budget already includes \$20 million in remittance to the Fund, so the government only needs to look for the additional \$5 million. But if the government fails to meet the minimum payment of \$25 million on its first year, "then how can it pay \$30 million or more a year in the years to come?" goes the question in peoples' mind.

Fourth, the CNMI's ability—or inability—to have its voice heard on major military plans in the Commonwealth would make a big difference in its economy and sovereignty. Among other things, the U.S. Department of Defense plans to use Pagan and Tinian for live-fire training, and to use Saipan as location for a divert airfield.

The governor said the military issues are among the "challenges" that the CNMI will continue to face in 2014.

Lastly, if tourism keeps its growth, then the CNMI would surely be on its way to economic recovery. However, should there be events beyond the CNMI's control that impacts tourist arrivals, then that could surely shake the islands to the core once again. But as Inos said last week, "We have to be optimistic."

'No to Tinian, Pagan use for live-fire training'

By **HAIDEE V. EUGENIO**
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REPORTER

Tinian Mayor Ramon Dela Cruz said the people of Tinian "will not accept an artillery range on our island," echoing House Speaker Joseph Deleon Guerrero's (Ind-Saipan) earlier call for the CNMI to make a stand now on the U.S. Department of Defense's plan to use both Pagan and Tinian for live-fire training.

The Tinian mayor, in a Dec. 31 letter to the speaker, suggests a meeting with Gov. Eloy S. Inos to discuss what Dela Cruz describes as a "critical issue."

"Perhaps we can develop a position that best reflects our people's desire and still support the military development

of their leased lands on Tinian," Dela Cruz said.

Deleon Guerrero scored the CNMI's lack of position on Pagan to this day. The speaker has been planning to author a resolution objecting to the use of Pagan for live-fire military training, among other things.

The U.S. military plans to use Tinian and Pagan to resolve its training deficiencies in the Western Pacific. Guam training areas are already being used to capacity.

Inos, in a separate interview, said the CNMI has not received any formal communication from the U.S. military about its plans for Pagan, among other things.

"Everything that's been brought up with respect to Pa-

gan is basically the EIS work that's being done over there... I would be concerned with live fire training capability out there, that's why we need to sit down with the military. We need to take into account also the desires of the community. I'm sure within the next couple of months, we will be sitting down and talking about a lot of these issues," the governor told *Saipan Tribune*.

Dela Cruz said the CNMI should address proposed amphibious training operations on Pagan and heavy artillery range on Tinian "now rather than later."

"I cannot speak for the people of Pagan but the people of Tinian will not accept an artillery

range on our island. The encroachment on our airspace is too much to ask. We can deal with DoD [in] maximizing the development of their leased lands on Tinian within the terms of the Covenant and the original technical agreement. However, that will require us to fully develop the southern one-third of Tinian through private economic development," the mayor told the speaker.

He said Tinian cannot do this if the air space is limited, compromising the investments of the Commonwealth Ports Authority, the Federal Aviation Administration and Tinian people in the airport to support the gaming industry, "just as it is about to boom." Tinian Dynasty

Hotel and Casino is the only operating casino in the CNMI right now.

"We can even make adjustments to support an Air Force-Navy-Marine Corps joint use 'divert facility' at West Field International Airport, but we cannot make adjustments for losing control over commuter services with Saipan [both sea and air]. This is critical to maximizing Tinian's economic development potential," Dela Cruz added.

Two-thirds of Tinian lands are already leased to the U.S. Department of Defense.

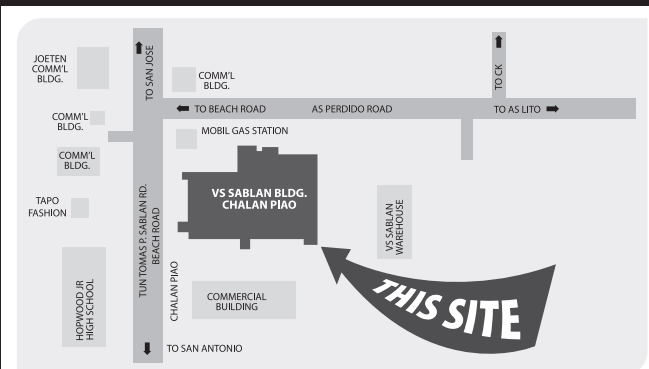
Joint Region Marianas commander Rear Admiral Tilghman Payne earlier said that local residents' concerns about the

proposed use of Pagan for live-fire training are being taken into consideration.

DoD is also proposing to develop a U.S. Air Force divert airfield on Saipan, even as the CNMI is united in its position to have the divert airfield placed on Tinian. The U.S. military has not decided on the location yet.

A newly-signed National Defense Authorization Act for fiscal year 2014 bars the U.S. Air Force from spending any of the \$29.3 million for the program until it reports to Congress on all the alternatives that have been considered, the overall construction requirements, and the cost/benefits of options for the land needed.

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Man injured in Garapan knife attack

A man who tried to stop another man from chasing a woman was in turn attacked with a kitchen knife at an apartment in western Garapan early Sunday morning.

The victim, Xing Lin, was taken to the Commonwealth Health Center due to a deep laceration on his nape that required 10 stitches, another laceration on his left shoulder, and a scratch on the back.

The suspect, Yong Hua Zhang, 30, was arrested Monday on charges of assault with a dangerous weapon, assault and battery, and disturbing the peace. His bail was set at \$6,250 cash.

Police detective Simon T. Manacop stated in his report that a police officer responded to a call about a disturbance on Sunday at 1:41am behind the Micro Beach Hotel.

When the officer arrived at the intersection of Coral Tree Avenue and Palm Street, he met Lin, who was bleeding. Medics came and transported him to CHC.

During an interview at CHC with the police officer, Lin said his friend had asked for his help in finding a woman on Saturday at about 8:30pm. The friend asked Lin to advise the woman that she was needed at work.

At 1:30am Sunday, the woman called Lin on the phone and asked him to come to her apartment

because there was a man who refused to let her out of her room.

Lin drove to the woman's apartment and, as he stood in front of the unit's door, he saw her trying to run out the door while the man held on to her clothing. Lin blocked the man, later identified as suspect Zhang.

When Lin asked Zhang what was going on, the latter went to a room on the third floor of the building, came back, and attacked Lin with a kitchen knife

measuring about eight inches long. Injured, Lin ran away and called for assistance.

Manacop said he arrested

Zhang late Monday afternoon, after spotting him in front of the Verde Spa in western Garapan. *(Ferdie De la Torre)*

6.6-magnitude earthquake in Vanuatu

GOLDEN, Colorado (AP)—The U.S. Geological Survey says a 6.6-magnitude earthquake has hit the South Pacific island nation of Vanuatu.

There are no immediate reports of damage or injuries. The Pacific Tsunami Warning Center says there is no tsunami warning in effect.

The USGS report says the quake hit early Thursday local time, with the epicenter 37 kilometers (23 miles) west of the village of Sola and 443 kilometers (275 miles) north of the capital, Port Vila.



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INVITATION TO BID ITB14-GOV-040

Garapan Water Quality Restoration Project Alternatives 2, 3 & 4

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lieutenant Governor Jude U. Hofschneider are soliciting sealed bids for the Construction of the Garapan Water Quality Restoration Project Alternatives 2, 3 & 4 – Garapan, Saipan Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The work will involve removal of existing roadway, utilities, sidewalks, driveways, and miscellaneous structures and landscaping and the installation of a new drainage/infiltration system beneath the roadway, new curb and gutter, new driveways, new sidewalks, new roadway, new landscaping, and the construction of a new bioswale system.

The project package will be available Friday, December 20, 2013 at the Governor's Capital Improvement Program (CIP) Administrator's Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. A \$100.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. Public Law 15-95 Local Preference Act, as amended by Public Law 15-118 does not apply to this Federally funded project. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a pre-bid conference for this project on Tuesday, January 7, 2014, 2:00PM ChST at the Governor's Conference Room, ground floor of the Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 PM ChST January 8, 2014 to Mr. Carl Castro, Contracting Officer's Technical Representative, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, or faxed to (670) 664-2408. All responses to questions will be copied to other prospective bidders.

Sealed bids must be marked "ITB14-GOV-040, Construction of the Garapan Water Quality Restoration Project Alternatives 2, 3 & 4". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 9:00 AM ChST Tuesday, January 21, 2014. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 9:00 AM ChST January 21, 2014, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 21, 2014 and must be received no later than January 29, 2014 ChST. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

Bids will be publicly opened and read at the Division of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, at 10:00 AM ChST January 29, 2014. However, if no notices of intent to bid are received from bidders outside the CNMI, bids will be opened at 10:00 AM ChST January 21, 2014.

For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid security of fifteen percent (15%) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. Bid security shall be on a bid bond, in cash, by certified check, cashier's check or other form acceptable to the government. A surety company shall hold the certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the Attorney General. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". If a bid bond is submitted it must be accompanied by an Insurer Clearance Certification (ICC).

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 70-30.3-245. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price for contracts greater than \$25,000.00.

Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- A certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P&S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

- Cash
- US Government Securities
- Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is Three Hundred (300) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per day, or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by Three Hundred (300) calendar days, the contract time and will be accessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

/s/ ELOY S. INOS, Governor
Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands

/s/ Herman S. Sablan, Director
Procurement and Supply, DOF



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INVITATION TO BID ITB14-GOV-044

Repair/Replacement of the Mechanical Equipment Commonwealth Health Center, Saipan MP

Governor Eloy S. Inos and Lt. Governor Jude U. Hofschneider, are soliciting sealed bids for the Repairs/Replacement of Mechanical Equipment at the Commonwealth Health Center (CHC), Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

The project package will be available on December 23, 2013 at the Governor's CIP Administrator's Office, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill. A \$100.00 non-refundable fee for the project package will be assessed. All interested bidders are required to include an Insurer Certification Clearance (ICC) in their bid packages in order to bid on this project. The ICC should be obtained at the Department of Commerce, Office of the Insurance Commissioner (OIC) on Capitol Hill.

Bidding procedures shall be in full compliance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations, as revised through May 24, 2001. Public Law 15-95 Local Preference Act, as amended by Public Law 15-118 does not apply to this Federally funded project. All wage rates for employees performing the work, labor and services on this project shall be paid at the current U.S. prevailing wage rates established for the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

There will be a Pre-bid Conference/Site Visit for this project at the project site on December 30, 2013, 10:00 a.m. ChST, at the Telemetry Room, CHC. Bidders are encouraged to visit the site to familiarize themselves with the site conditions prior to submitting their bid. All questions regarding this project must be submitted in writing no later than 4:30 p.m. local time on January 06, 2014 to Ms. Elizabeth Balajadia, Project Manager for the Capital Improvement Office, Office of the Governor, Juan A. Sablan Administration Building, Capitol Hill, Saipan, Fax Number (670) 664-2408 or email: balajadiaelizabeth@hotmail.com Response to questions will be shared with all prospective bidders.

Sealed bids must be marked "ITB14-GOV-044, Repair/Replacement of the Mechanical Equipment at the Commonwealth Health Center". For bidders within the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be submitted to the Director of Procurement and Supply, Lower Base, Saipan, no later than 9:30 AM ChST Tuesday, January 21, 2014. Bidders located outside of the CNMI may obtain an additional seven (7) working days for receipt of their bids by submitting a Notice of Intent to Bid. Notices of Intent to Bid must be received by the Director of Procurement & Supply no later than 9:30 AM ChST January 21, 2014, and must be transmitted via facsimile to (670) 664-1515, or via e-mail to procurement@pticom.com. For bidders located outside the CNMI, an original and two copies of sealed bids must be postmarked by the U.S. Postal Service or the official government postal service of a foreign country no later than January 21, 2014 and must be received no later than January 29, 2014 ChST. Note that failure to submit the required number of copies may be cause for rejection of a bid.

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For bids greater than Twenty-Five Thousand Dollars (\$25,000.00) a bid bond of fifteen percent (15 %) of the bid amount must accompany the bid. This security may be a Certified Check, Cashier's Check or Bid Bond. Checks must be made payable to the CNMI Treasurer, with the name of the bidder and a notation on the face of the check: "Credit Account No. 44660". Surety companies must hold a certificate of authority from the U.S. Secretary of the Treasury as an acceptable surety or other surety acceptable to the CNMI Attorney General.

The bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be subject to a responsibility determination in conformance with the CNMI Procurement Regulations Section 3-301. The responsible bidder submitting the lowest responsive bid will be awarded a contract with the CNMI Government and will be required to deliver Performance and Payment bonds, each equal to 100% of the contract price. Prior to the execution of the contract, the selected contractor shall submit:

- A current license from the bonding company showing that it has authority to issue bond in the CNMI, and
- Under penalty of perjury, a certification from the bonding company that the unencumbered value of its assets (exclusive of all outstanding commitments on other bond obligations) exceeds the penal amount of each bond.

A contractor submitting an unacceptable payment or performance bond may be permitted a reasonable time, as determined by the P & S Director, to substitute an acceptable bond prior to executing a contract.

Acceptable assets are only:

- Cash
- US Government Securities
- Stocks and Bonds traded on US Security Exchange
- Real Property owned in fee simple in US; and
- Irrevocable Letters of Credit

Performance time for completion of this project is Three Hundred (300) calendar days upon issuance of Notice to Proceed. The daily amount of liquidated damages shall be greater of (i) Five Hundred Dollars (\$500.00) per day, or (ii) two percent (2%) of the contract price divided by Three Hundred (300) calendar days, the contract time and will be accessed as delays beyond the established completion date.

All bid documents received shall become the sole property of the CNMI Government. The Government reserves the right to reject any or all bids and to waive any imperfection in a bid proposal that does not affect the elements of price, quantity, and delivery of the bid, in the best interest of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands.

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Saipan hotels light up the sky

More than 1,000 tourists and residents trooped to hotels on Saipan to greet the New Year and were rewarded with fireworks displays that lit up the island's skies at the strike of midnight last Jan. 1, 2013.

At Kanoa Resort, close to 200 people rang in the New Year at the Barefoot Bar. Majority of the crowd wore clothes that had different hues of red as Kanoa Resort had a promotion that evening and early morning that gave away hotel stay, lunch buffets, and other gift certificates to people who caught general manager Mark Ratliff's fancy.

After the barbecue dinner, the New Year countdown festivities started with DJ Fade spinning upbeat tunes at the corner of the bar.

The New Year countdown party also featured all-you-can drink beverage and chasers of chicken wings, lumpia, and nachos and cheese dip.

At five minutes before midnight, Kanoa Resort staff on top of the hotel's rooftop lit up

\$2,000 worth of fireworks that last around 10 minutes.

"We had close to 200 guests for the [New Year countdown] party and for us that's pretty good. The fireworks were beautiful, people were beautiful, DJ all night long. I'm just wishing everybody a really happy New Year," Ratliff later said.

A stone's throw away at Saipan World Resort, local sales manager Mike Babauta said about 300 people showed up for their fireworks display.

"For the countdown party we had probably 180, but during the fireworks display more than 300 people showed up. We gave free champagne to all. It was a very good turnout. We had the biggest fireworks display on island and everyone was happy and impressed."

Babauta said World Resort actually hosted two countdown parties on Dec. 31 and Jan. 1—one for Russian guests at the Royal Taga Hall and another at its Sunset Garden for house and local guests.

Over at Fiesta Resort & Spa Saipan, F&B director Das Krishnan said the Garapan landmark hosted 720 local and off-island guests at its New Year countdown party.

Of that number, Krishnan said about 560 are tourists from Japan who booked their reservations for the hotel's New Year countdown party months back.

Aside from the island's famous barbecue, the dinner show also treated guests to a spread of lobster tail, lechon, and king prawn, among others.

An eight-member band entertained everyone all evening, on top of a Zumba marathon, games for children, and a six-minute fireworks display worth \$3,000.

Further north, Mariana Resort & Spa executive chef William Retardo said some 166 guests graced their countdown party. He said the Marpi hotel spent around \$4,500 for their fireworks display that lasted 10 minutes. Guests were also treated to a fire dance show.

"We are very pleased with the turnout. We can only accommodate 200 people at the maximum, so we are already glad with our numbers," said Retardo.

At Hyatt Regency Saipan, assistant manager for marketing and communications Luis Villagomez said about 700 people attended their New Year countdown. He said the hotel's three-minute fireworks display was donated by Pacific Trading Co. and Pacific Wines and Spirits. *(Mark Rabago)*

CCA general membership meeting

The Commonwealth Cancer Association is inviting the community, cancer survivors, friends, and supporters to its annual general membership meeting on Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014, at 5:30pm at the CCA conference room.

The agenda will include the president's 2013 annual report.

Immediately after the annual report, election of board of directors will commence. Nominations for board members will be accepted in advance via email and/or on the floor.

To submit a board nomination or for more information, call CCA at 682-0050 or email at cca@ccamarianas.org. *(CCA)*

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7 hurt after pickup truck goes airborne

By **FERDIE DE LA TORRE**
ferdie_delatorre@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

A pickup truck driven by an allegedly intoxicated man swerved, ran off the road, and went airborne after it hit a bunker, injuring all its seven occupants, last Nov. 30 in Dandan.

Department of Public Safety spokesman Travis Hurst said he just released yesterday the information about the crash as the investigation report had just been finalized.

Hurst said the driver sustained a fractured left arm and was charged with driving under the influence of alcohol after a blood draw at the Commonwealth Health Center found him to have a Blood Alcohol Content of .115g of alcohol per 100 milliliter of blood.

In the CNMI, a person driv-

ing with a BAC of .08 or higher will be arrested for DUI.

A male juvenile seated in the cabin sustained a fractured right leg. A female who was also in the cabin suffered a fractured collarbone.

All four passengers seated in the bed of the truck were all ejected and suffered minor bruises and cuts.

Hurst said police officer Adrian Mendiola was dispatched to Dandan by the Japanese bunker area on Nov. 30, 2013, at 3:21pm where an auto crash occurred.

Mendiola learned that the white Ford Ranger pickup truck was traveling north on Flame Tree Road when it lost control and slid to the grassy area.

The truck hit the bunker, causing it to go airborne and ejecting all four passengers seated in the bed.

During the investigation, Mendiola detected and found

the driver to be under the influence of alcohol.

The truck had major damage on the driver's side.

Blanco elected zoning board chair for 3rd time

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Members of the Saipan Zoning Board affirmed once again their trust and confidence in their chairman, Diego C. Blanco, who was re-elected to the position during a regular meeting Friday night. This marks Blanco's third time to take the helm of the board since being first appointed to the post.

Besides Blanco, Gus Kai-pat was elected as the new vice board chairman while Bruce Bateman and Natalie Mabel

Ayuyu won the seats of secretary and treasurer, respectively.

The Commonwealth Zoning Board is composed of seven members, four of whom are officers.

"I feel so honored that my colleagues re-elected me back to continue leading the board. The past several years have been so difficult and challenging for the zoning program

and I am proud to have been part of its governing board to ensure that improvements to the program are continuously updated and implemented accordingly to cater to our island's economy," Blanco told *Saipan Tribune*.

Despite the office's many progresses and accomplishments, Blanco said many challenges still face the zoning program.



Blanco

"There's still a long way to go, but with optimism and a hardworking staff, I'm sure that the benefits of zoning on our communities will far outweigh the cons in no time... please take a tour around our islands and witness the many positive changes that have already begun taking effect," he said.

This year, Blanco's priorities include continuing finding ways to improve the zoning law and program "to help our businesses, property owners, visitors, and overall economy; and to appeal to our lawmakers, governor, and lieutenant governor to help the program with its operational and financial needs."

Blanco also commended Zoning administrator Therese Ogumoro and her staff for their dedication and efforts to keep beautifying the island, and particularly for the creation of the agency's website.

COMMUNITY BRIEFS

MHS Class of 1993 get-together today

MHS Alumni president Vivian Sablan and Planning Committees would like to inform everyone that there will be a "Class Get-Together" today Friday, Jan. 3, 2014, starting at 5:30pm at the Oleai Beach Bar & Grill, Beach Road, San Jose. For more information contact Maryann Borja-Arriola at 483-2279 or Vivian Sablan at 288-1129. (PR)

Cleanup at Pau Pau Beach on Sat.

The Division of Environmental Quality's Cleanup Brigade will be at it again picking up trash at Pau Pau Beach this Saturday, Jan. 4, 2014, at 8am.

If you would like to volunteer, meet the DEQ representatives on Saturday at the Pau Pau Beach parking lot at 8am. Volunteers will split into groups and clean until 10am and break for drinks and then continue, if needed.

This month, outstanding brigade volunteers who participated in at least 10 monthly cleanups will receive a brigade cap and those who participated in at least three cleanups will receive a brigade t-shirt. For more information about volunteering, contact the DEQ office at 664-8500/1. (DEQ)



Northern Marianas Humanities Council

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Article XII: Land Ownership in the Northern Mariana Islands

Moderated by **Robert T. Torres**

Produced by the Northern Marianas Humanities Council

This program, moderated by attorney Robert T. Torres, consists of three one-hour panel discussions focusing on Article XII of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands (CNMI) Constitution. It aims to provide an informed and objective presentation of facts and a variety of viewpoints relating to land alienation in the CNMI. Although there is no way to cover all of the complexities of Article XII in a three-hour program, this series provides basic information that hopefully will encourage viewers to discuss and consider this important topic with their families, friends and colleagues. It is intended for anyone wishing to learn more about the history, effects and possible future of Article XII.

Part 1: The Foundation

Panelists: Marianas Political Status Commission members Vicente N. Santos and Pedro A. Tenorio

Part 1 looks at the history of the provision that limits land ownership in the CNMI to persons of Northern Marianas Descent. Where did the idea originate? What was the purpose of including it? Why did Section 805 of the Covenant require that this provision be retained for a minimum of 25 years before it might be reconsidered?

Part 1 will air on KSPN Channel 2 at 6:30 pm on January 6, 7, and 8, 2014.

Part 2: Today's Perspectives

Panelists: Lorenzo DLG Cabrera, Representative George N. Camacho, and Alex A. Sablan

Part 2 looks at the impacts of Article XII today. What is the definition of "Northern Marianas Descent" under Article XII of the CNMI Constitution? What have been the positive and negative effects of Article XII with respect to cultural preservation, the economy, and families and individuals?

Part 2 will air on KSPN Channel 2 at 6:30 pm on January 13, 14, and 15, 2014.

Part 3: The Future

Panelists: Vincent J. Seman, Carolyn P. Hosono, and House Vice-Speaker Francisco S. Dela Cruz

Part 3 looks at the future Article XII. Does Article XII need to be changed? What are some options for modifying Article XII? Who should have the right to vote on Article XII?

Part 3 will air on KSPN Channel 2 at 6:30 pm on January 20, 21, and 22, January 2014.

Flashback

A LOOK BACK AT PAST YEARS' HEADLINES

January 3, 2006

Dozen-plus violators to face deportation cases

More than a dozen of citizens the Federated States of Micronesia and the Republic of Palau are going to be slapped soon with deportation cases. These citizens from FSM and Palau have been convicted of felonies and at least two misdemeanor charges on Saipan, sources at the Division of Immigration and the Attorney General's Office disclosed to the Saipan Tribune. Sources said the government is hoping that the filing of the deportation cases on Friday against Douglas Amaichy Phillip, a Chuukese, and Regis Iyekar, a Palauan, would establish "an important precedent."

Babauta retires from govt service

Gov. Juan N. Babauta tendered his retirement from government service last month. As an elected official, though, the governor remains in office until the new administration comes in on Jan. 9. Based on the NMI Retirement Fund's list, Babauta is among the 179 government retirees in 2005. Although he is not qualified for the 30 percent early retirement bonus since his service exceeds 20 years, Babauta is still believed to be getting quite an attractive retirement package due to his earned credits.



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FY 2013 FIGURES INDICATE:

Over 1K new library cards issued; \$6K fines collected

The Joeten Kiyu Public Library issued a total of 1,149 new library cards and collected overdue fines worth \$6,751.2 in fiscal year 2013, according to the recently released Comparative Snapshot.

The CNMI state library issued the most number of library cards in January with 112, fol-

lowed by August (109) and September (105), while the least number of issuances came in December 2012 with 48, followed by March (67) and November 2012 (73).

In library fines, May topped the list with \$1,111.24 assessed, followed by January (\$722.21) and June (\$711.72). The months

with the least library fines levied were December 2012 (\$359), February (\$378.03), and October 2012 (\$406.28).

Circulation in fiscal year 2013, meanwhile, averaged 5,043.33, with the highest recorded in June with 5,941 and the lowest in September 2013 with 4,038.

In terms of patron base, JKPL

had a total of 399,184 in fiscal year 2013, which averages out to 36,317 per month. The highest patron base was recorded in August with 36,669 and the lowest in October 2012 with 36,080.

Collections totaled 778,145 for the fiscal year for an average of 64,485. August had the most collections with 66,155,

while October 2012 had the least with 63,504.

In terms of patron traffic, the state library had 85,721 total in fiscal year 2013. June had the most patron traffic with 8,671, while December 2012 had the least with 5,812.

Results of the Comparative Snapshot for fiscal year 2013

were affected by the JKPL being closed for a week of professional development training for the 23rd Annual PIALA and 18th PEC events from July 14 to 20. PIALA stands for Pacific Islands Association of Libraries, Archives, and Museums, while PEC is the acronym for Pacific Education Conference. *(Mark Rabago)*

MCS expands search for annual distinguished graduate awardee

By **MONETH G. DEPOSA**
moneth_deposa@saipantribune.com
REPORTER

Mount Carmel School's search for the recipient of its distinguished graduate award will be expanded beginning this year to include former students who spent at least some years at the school.

This was announced yesterday by Mount Carmel School president Galvin Deleon Guerrero, who also revealed the renaming of the prestigious award to "AlumKnight of the Year." Nominations will be opened to AlumKnights who spent at least four consecutive years at the institution.

According to Deleon Guerrero, this change will help honor many AlumKnights who, for very legitimate reasons, had to transfer to other schools.

"In some cases AlumKnights spent over a decade at the school but had to transfer before graduation for family emergencies. Those AlumKnights, however, are still very loyal to their alma mater," he said.

"We have this saying: Once a Knight, always a Knight. Changing the award in this way will make that saying more meaningful to the entire AlumKnight

family," Deleon Guerrero added.

Besides expanding the pool of nominees, the announcement of the award is being moved from the school's annual Family Night to a new tradition at the school, the annual Night with the Knights fundraising banquet, to be held on Saturday, Feb. 1, to conclude the school's celebration of 2014 Catholic Schools Week.

All members of the community are invited to submit nominations for AlumKnight of the Year. The school's Leadership Team and past awardees will screen nominees and select an awardee based on that AlumKnight's lifelong fulfillment of the school's mission and philosophy.

Since 1998, Mount Carmel School has given the award to individuals who have distinguished themselves as leaders in business, government, and the community and who represent the institution's trademark values of faith, excellence, and success.

The deadline for AlumKnight of the Year nominations is on Jan. 17. To submit a nomination, or for more information, email the school's director of institutional development, John Blanco, at johnsblanco@gmail.com, or Deleon Guerrero at galvin.deleonguerrero@gmail.com.

Coca-Cola's promo winner shares joy with grandkids

Lourdes R. Regino, a grandmother of two, won the Xbox Kinect at the second drawing of the Coca-Cola "Open a Season of Happiness" promo.

"After 18 years on Saipan, this is my first time to win. I'm so happy that I won the prize and I immediately sent it to my two grandchildren in the Philippines," Regino, a resident of San Antonio, said.

A food vendor who delivers breakfast and lunch to government and private offices on Saipan, Regino said that she buys six cases of Coca-Cola, Diet Coke, Fanta Orange, and Fuze 12-can packs every three days. She looks forward to trying her luck anew at the grand drawing.

Completing the circle of the second drawing winners are Frances S. Reyes and Andrew Masga, who each received a \$50 movie theater gift card, and Keith Robert Pangelinan and Frances Muna, who won a \$52 gas voucher apiece.

The grand drawing will be held today, Jan. 3, 2014, at Joeten Shopping Center in Susupe from 5pm to 7pm. Coca-Cola will be giving away thousands of dollars in valuable prizes including a year's supply of gas, a staycation package for two adults and two children, a Sam-



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Lourdes R. Regino wins an Xbox Kinect at the second drawing of Coca-Cola's "Open a Season of Happiness" promotion. After 18 years on Saipan, Regino, a food vendor and resident of San Antonio, said that this was her first time to win. She sent the gaming console to her two grandchildren in the Philippines. Rusty M. Loyola, operations manager, Coca-Cola Beverage Co. (Micronesia), Inc. presented the prize at the Coca-Cola offices in Chalan Laulau.

sung S4, two \$500 Joeten shopping certificates, and three \$250 movie theater gift cards.

Coca-Cola will distribute a limited edition "Since 1886" T-shirt to the first 25 customers to purchase any Coca-Cola

12 pack. Free samples of Fuze Strawberry Iced Tea will be served to customers at the drawing while supplies last. *(PR)*

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547 • FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEY FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS
HOUSING CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
-v-
LYDIA R. SASO, RYO SASO,
and MARIANA R. CONCEPCION,
Defendants.

CIVIL
ACTION
NO.
13-0211

SUMMONS FOR PUBLICATION

TO: LYDIA R. SASO and RYO SASO,
Defendants:

YOU ARE HEREBY SUMMONED and notified to file any answer you wish to make to the Complaint, a copy which is served upon you hereby, within twenty-one (21) days after the fourth publication of this Summons, and to deliver or mail a copy of our answer to THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC, the Plaintiff's attorney, whose address is Post Office Box 5222, Saipan, MP 96950, as soon as practicable after filing your answer or sending it to the Clerk of Courts for filing.

Your answer should be in writing and filed with the Clerk of this Court at Susupe, Saipan. It may be prepared and signed for you by your counsel and sent to the Clerk of this Court by messenger or mail. It is not necessary for you to appear personally until further notice.

If you fail to answer in accordance with this Summons, judgment by default may be taken against you for the relief demanded in the Complaint.

Dated December 27, 2013 by order of the Court:

/s/Clerk of Court

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547 • FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

UNION BANK,
Plaintiff,
-v-
JUAN L. EVANGELISTA,
Defendant.

CIVIL ACTION
NO. 94-1046

FIFTEENTH AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to a Second Amended Order issued by the Court in this matter on August 2, 2010, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendant in and to the following property: Tract 22845-19 (part of original Tract 22845-REM, A.H. 31), as more particularly described on Drawing/Cadastral Plat No. 2083/84, the original of which was recorded August 2, 1984, as Document No. 84-1398 at the office of the Commonwealth Recorder, Saipan.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 24, 2014, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 24th day of December, 2013:

/s/MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer

Robert Tenorio Torres
Attorney at Law
Plata Drive, Whispering Palms (Chalan Kiya)
P.O. Box 503758
Saipan, MP 96950

Tel: (670) 234-7859
Fax: (670) 234-5749

Attorney for Claimant Marianas Public Land Trust

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT FOR THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE NORTHERN
MARIANA ISLANDS

IN THE MATTER
OF:
GREGORIA I.
MALLEN,
Decedent.

Civil Action
No. 06-0017
NOTICE OF HEARING ON
PETITION FOR FINAL
DECREE OF DISTRIBUTION

Date: January 28, 2014
Time: 1:30 PM
Judge: Honorable David
A. Wiseman

TO: THE GENERAL PUBLIC, ANY HEIRS,
CLAIMANTS, OR CREDITORS OF THE LATE
GREGORIA I. MALLEN:

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that Cynthia I. Deleon Guerrero, Administratrix of the Estate of Gregoria I. Malles, has filed with the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands a Petition for Final Decree of Distribution. The attorney for Claimant Marianas Public Land Trust is Robert T. Torres, Attorney at Law, whose address is Plata Drive, Chalan Kiya, P.O. Box 503758, Saipan, MP 96950.

The hearing on the Petition for Final Decree of Distribution has been set for the 28th day of January, 2014 at 1:30 PM at the Superior Court of the Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands, Guma Hustisia, Civic Center, Saipan, Commonwealth of the Northern Mariana Islands. All interested person or entities should appear at this hearing.

Dated this 19th day of December 2013.

Clerk of Court
/s/
Deputy Clerk of Court

MICHAEL A. WHITE, ESQ. F0122
THE LAW OFFICES OF MICHAEL A. WHITE, LLC
POST OFFICE BOX 5222
SAIPAN, MARIANA ISLANDS 96950
TEL: (670) 234-6547 • FAX: (670) 234-9537

ATTORNEYS FOR Plaintiff

IN THE SUPERIOR COURT OF THE
COMMONWEALTH OF THE
NORTHERN MARIANA ISLANDS

NORTHERN MARIANAS
HOUSING CORPORATION,
Plaintiff,
-v-
DIEGO A. SASAMOTO and
ANICIA S. SASAMOTO,
Defendants.

CIVIL ACTION
NO. 11-0261

SECOND AMENDED NOTICE OF SALE

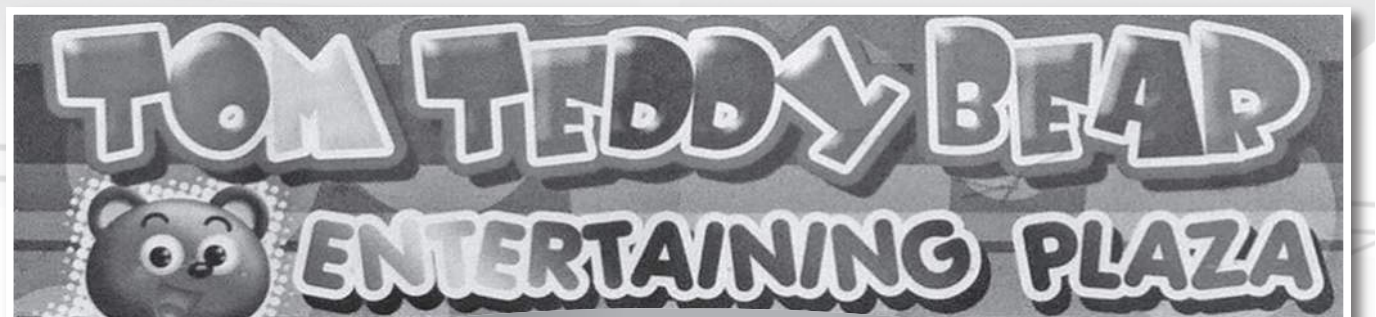
NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN that, pursuant to an Order issued by the Court in this matter on October 9, 2012, I will sell, at public auction, to the highest bidder, on the terms and conditions set forth hereinbelow, all of the right, title, and interest of Defendants in and to the following property: Lot No. 011 G 736, situated in Kagman III, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands, containing an area of 800 square meters, more or less, as shown on the Division of Lands and Survey Official Cadastral Plat No. 011 G 14, dated December 1, 1993, Commonwealth Recorder's File No. 93-4182, the description therein being incorporated herein by reference.

Date, Time, and Place of Sale. The sale will be held on Friday, January 24, 2014, at the hour of 1:30 p.m., at The Law Offices of Michael A. White, LLC, Joeten Center, Susupe, Saipan, Northern Mariana Islands. The sale will be open to the general public.

Terms and Conditions of Sale. The Terms and Conditions of Sale may be obtained from the undersigned, either prior to or at the sale. These terms and conditions shall govern the conduct of the sale.

DATED, this 24th day of December, 2013:

/s/MICHAEL A. WHITE, Auctioneer



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Opinion

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Saipan Tribune

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Mark Rabago ASSOCIATE EDITOR

MEMBER

AP The Associated Press

Pacific Islands News Association

EDITORIAL

A nuclear megabargain

Iran is churning out nuclear fuel and may be on the brink of nuclear weapons capability. North Korea has already busted into the nuclear club, testing two bombs. The U.S. and its allies fear terrorists may someday acquire a nuclear weapon.

Today, however, we spotlight a rare international nuclear nonproliferation success that has made the world safer: A two-decade-long deal to recycle Russian nuclear warheads and turn the uranium into fuel to power American nuclear reactors. The agreement—called “Megatons to Megawatts,” started in the ruins of the former Soviet Union. Russians, Americans—the world—feared that the Russian nuclear arsenal was vulnerable to thieves, terrorists and even Russian nuclear workers who weren’t being regularly paid.

The idea for Megatons to Megawatts was to funnel billions in hard currency into Russia and help secure their weapons by melting down warheads for fuel. Result: Enough highly enriched uranium to fuel about 20,000 weapons has been safely converted into nuclear fuel to light homes and provide energy for Americans across the country. That’s 20,000 nuclear warheads not pointed at U.S. or European cities.

This deal has yielded a huge U.S. energy bonanza: The warheads, diluted and fabricated into nuclear fuel, produced nearly half of all U.S. commercial nuclear energy in the last 15 years, according to the U.S. Department of Energy. Overall, this program is responsible for nearly 10 percent of all U.S. electricity in the same period, the department says.

It would be hard to overstate the benefits of this deal. “This program provided a flow of money and thousands of jobs to nuclear facilities in Russia that were desperate for cash and jobs,” nuclear expert Matthew Bunn of Harvard tells us. Nuclear workers “who might have stolen highly enriched uranium, because they hadn’t been paid in six months, instead got paid, had reasonable work to do.”

The program also helped beef up security for Russia’s nuclear sites. “It was a very important element of stabilizing the Russian nuclear complex at a critical time,” Bunn says.

Credit MIT physicist Thomas Neff for this pioneering idea. “I’ve spent 15 years working in arms control and nuclear weapons proliferation, and I’m also an expert in the world’s nuclear fuels markets—those two things suddenly came together,” he told a reporter in 1993.

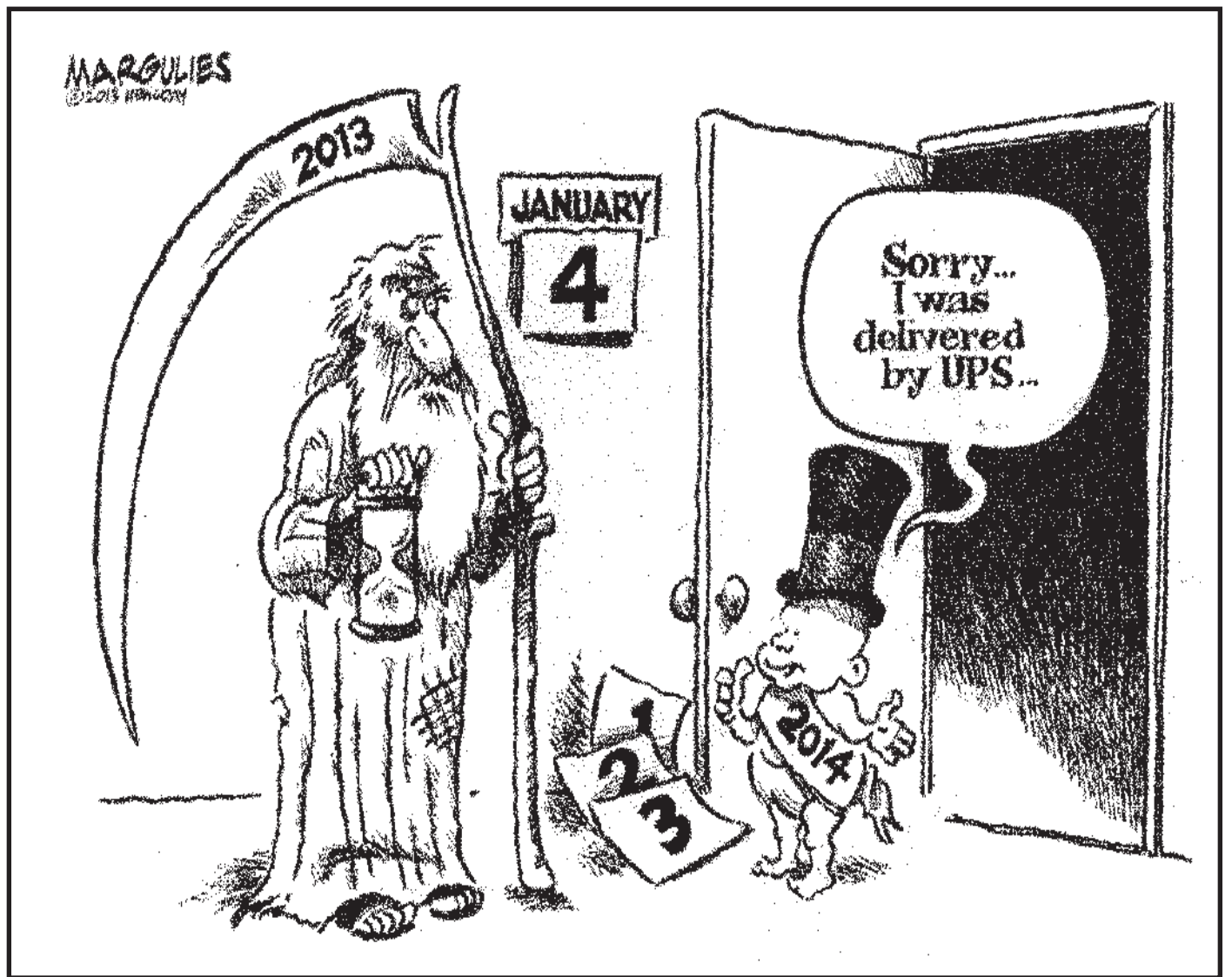
The way Neff figured it, for the cost of four B-2 bombers—“whose mission was to go in and take out (Russian) missile silos”—the U.S. neutralized 20,000 warheads.

Still, the deal almost didn’t happen. Neff told us that he initially couldn’t convince U.S. officials to make the first move. And the Russians were suspicious of U.S. motives.

So Neff pitched the idea directly to Viktor Mikhailov, head of the Russian weapons program. Then he spent the better part of a dozen years patching up disagreements and “going back and forth between the two governments to keep the thing from collapsing.”

Ultimately both sides reaped what Neff promised two decades ago: A “fantastic deal.”

©2013 Chicago Tribune



Traffic days and Thursdays get me down

Our ticket-to-ride was going to be a laidback 36-hour rail travel on a soft seat (the lower berth of two double-decked bunks in a private compartment) between Canton (to oldies)/Guangzhou (to newbies) and Shenyang, crossing the Pearl, Yangtze, and the Yellow rivers as I hurried back to the Shenyang Aerospace University campus to vacate my university housing at the Friendship Villa of SAU’s International Education Center. Across China, the rule of foreign teachers to be under 65 is being implemented. We are three rivers past the chronological bend!

I am now learning to ride the friendly and ferocious dragon as a mode of existence. But first, for the literalist among us, there is no such animal as a dragon as depicted in the *Shēngxiào*, misnamed in English as Chinese zodiac, which has no constellations related at all. Rather, it is a scheme, a systematic plan of future actions that relates each year to an animal and its reputed attributes, following a 12-year cycle. The 11 of the 12 signs are earthly and tangible creatures but the imagined dragon is just as real.

I started pedagogy at SAU in 2011, the Year of the Rabbit, represented by that little thingy in the field that hurries with speed and much gusto, cuddly as a pet, a prolific multiplier, and reportedly fun to raise. We are conversant of developmental economics at the rural village level, and the SAU’s economics department got me to teach mostly Third World students micro and macroeconomics, with all the econometric equations to show Adam Smith’s law of supply and demand. After perusing the textbooks, it became obvious that econometrics written by book rabbits with algebraic bents are useless tools played only in the academe, so we disengaged from the discipline on irrelevance.

2012 brought us the Year of the Dragon, the “long” that sounds like the word for “river,” thus Heilongjiang, the name for Manchuria’s northernmost province, also the river Amur that borders China to the Russian Far East. The vitality of the southern twin rivers of Chiang Jiang (Yangtze) and the Huanghe (Yellow) and the fertility of the land in between is the cradle of Chinese civilization, home to the Han, the ethnic group that constitutes 9 out of 10 Chinese. The traditional dragon dance in Chinese celebrations depicts the appeasing and taming of the shrew, the balancing and harmonizing *taiji* (yin-yang) preoccupation.

2013 moved us to the Year of the Snake, the smart animal (represented as the sly devil in Western myths). After three years of opening up the portals of the English world so it can find home and acceptance through ease of use in the dragon’s lair (EnlisChE, as spelled by the Dutch, is my English with Chinese characteristics in our term), we finally developed the skill to make the discipline and art a science. However, CCP “smarts” sharpened to implement

By JAIME VERGARA

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Jaime Vergara is a resident of Saipan teaching at the Shenyang Aerospace University in China. His email is pinoypanda2031@aol.com.



age rules this year, so we are left to hustle with not much room for despair. The *Pinoy* is world-wise and street-smart in my book. I shall stay true to form.

Jan. 31, 2014, ushers the Year of the Horse in the Lunar New Year. I visited eastern Inner Mongolia around Hulun Baier and Manzhouli last year, allowing a couple of days in the open grassland and I saw why the Mongolian stallion (short but not a pony) is a revered majestic animal of elegant breeding since Genghis Khan.

We’ve been babbling on the traffic of the mind through the Chinese calendar symbols, clearly rooted on earth, utilizing animals to embody that earthiness not only on the year one is born in but also on the month (inner), the day (true), and the hour (secretively). Thus one can be a dragon by birth year, but also a snake internally by the month, truly an ox by the day, and a sheep by the hour. In all, however, the quality of being human is symbolically derived from relating to other living creatures on Planet Earth and not from the placement of fire in the constellations as reflected in the Western zodiac.

Created by the Masr-Graeco-Roman staring up the skies, life in heaven is a Western goal, literally and metaphorically. We commented in our previous articles on Madiba and how African dance differs from, say, Zorba the Greek, with the latter’s arms and hand opened to the rhythm of the spheres, while the hop and stomp of the southern African hoedown is rooted on planet Earth.

Snowy Sunday in Dong Bei got us off the ground to hazy Hong Kong. HK tarmac traffic Thursday gets us back to icy Shenyang, and what a ground ride it was to the terminal! My taxi driver to the airport, evidently among an all-female staff ‘cause the traffic in her walkie-talkie were all female voices, cut and crisscrossed multi-lane traffic while holding a lively chat with the girls, blaring her horn liberally through traffic, a trait I normally associate with misplaced dragon machismos among semi and six-wheel truck drivers in U.S. highways. The lady taxi driver got me sitting on the edge of my seat. She was one friendly and ferocious dragon, possibly a snake to boot.

2014 can only bring a wild horse to ride! Tally-ho!

EDITORIAL POLICY

Letters to the editor must include the NAME, VILLAGE ADDRESS, and CONTACT NUMBER of the contributor. Letters that do not have these information will immediately be trashed. Contributions consisting of 500 words or less have more chances of getting published. The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to publish a contribution or not; the right to edit submissions for length, accuracy, and clarity; and the right to publish and distribute contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats. Submissions may be sent via snail mail to the 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan, 96950; fax (670) 235-3740; e-mail to editor@saipantribune.com; or through our website at www.saipantribune.com.

Chiclet and tablet meet-and-match

I went to a big, impressive electronics store during my holiday travels, so I'm going to mention some of the tech stuff I saw. If you've been ensconced on Saipan, or some such other isolated island, I'll be your eyes and ears for the Big City scene, at least insofar as it concerns computers.

It's not a comprehensive survey, but just some highlights of things that caught my attention as I wandered the aisles.

One thing I noticed is that "Chiclet" keyboards seem to be the dominant breed in notebook computers. This style, so named, I surmise, for a brand of square-shaped chewing gum, has space between the keys, as opposed to the traditional arrangement where the keys almost butt up against each other.

I'm a touch typist and between the Chiclet style and the traditional style, I have a strong preference. There's no need to mention my preference, however, since yours might not be the same as mine, or since you might not have a preference at all.

But I think that any computer buyer should be aware of the distinction. So I would not blindly order a computer from Saipan without first getting my hands on a representative keyboard for a try-out.

Having invited your attention to that subtle, but possibly critical, detail, I'll mention something glaringly obvious: Smart phones are a big deal. Phones are now computers, and computers are now phones. This is apparent whether you're in Marpi, Manila, or Manhattan.

As obvious as that is, a couple of things did surprise me. One was the sheer number of models of smart phones. I saw dozens of offerings. The other thing was the prices on these things, which were often over \$600, and which went as high as \$899.

While cell phones have been blurring into tablet computers, I not-

ed that tablet computers have been morphing into notebook computers. On the big side of things, I saw many tablets that were up to 10.6 inches in size (measured diagonally). Some such tablets have folding covers (folios) that have integrated keyboards; this feature, from what I saw, is something extra to buy, not something included with the basic tablet.

In that realm, of the keyboards I tried, most of them struck me as OK for sending a quick e-mail, or other minimal duties, but were certainly no substitute for a normal keyboard.

However, one keyboard struck me as really good. This was the Microsoft Type Surface 2, which was priced at \$130. This mates with the 10.6-inch screen Microsoft Surface Pro tablet; the examples I saw ranged from \$349 to \$1,299. Of course, you're in Windows territory here, with versions of Windows 8.1 being used.

This Windows thing introduces a broader issue: operating systems. The old Windows-or-Mac decision faced by average consumers is no longer so simple. For one thing, as tablets have grown in popularity, so, too, has the tablet-centric Android operating system, which is by Google.

But Google has another operating system, called Chrome, that is also growing in popularity. Chrome is a system that operates via the so-called "cloud," meaning that all the heavy lifting is done on Google's side, not the user's side, of the Internet.

As a result, Chrome computers (which are made by a variety of big names, including Samsung and HP), are simple and cheap, since they are basically dedicated Internet appliances. I saw some "Chromebook" computers, generally smallish notebooks, for as little as \$200. The Google Docs office suite, which is free, meshes

By **ED STEPHENS**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

Visit Ed at EdStephensJr.com. His column runs every Friday.



with this system, and takes care of such common tasks as word processing and spreadsheets. Google Docs works on more than just Chrome systems, by the way, so it's not limited to this single realm.

Meanwhile, Apple is still going strong, of course, but I didn't get a chance to eyeball their products other than the MacBook Air. The example I saw had a 13.3-inch screen (which, as a frequent traveler, I think is an optimal size), was extremely light, had 128GB of flash memory, and cost \$1,099. I'll note that it uses a Chiclet-style keyboard. If you like that style of keyboard, you might really like this computer.

Overall, in terms of brand names, I noticed that Samsung is really coming on strong, not only with its line of smart phones but also in tablets, notebook computers, and laser printers. On the other hand, I saw very few offerings from Toshiba, which used to be a popular brand of computer.

Anyway, that's what I saw in the big store in the big city.

What's the big thing for 2014? I think that Google Chrome will be the star of the year.

How to manage the financial risk of investing in college

By **ALAN BENSON, KRISHNA ESTEVA and FRANK LEVY**
LOS ANGELES TIMES

Smack in the middle of the holiday rush, college applications are due—anxious weeks for high school seniors and their families. To heighten the anxiety, no month passes without a critic proclaiming that college is a pedantic waste of money, while opinion polls show a rising fraction of the public doubts the value of a college education. Yet many studies find that college still outperforms other investments, at least for the typical student.

Any student trying to make sense of this confusion should recognize that investing in a college education differs from other investments in two important respects. First, you have some control over the return on your investment (unlike the performance of a stock). Second, you have inside information on how to invest because you're investing in yourself.

In our study of college costs and returns in California, we recognized that some students drop out while others take more than four years to graduate. Nonetheless, we found that entering freshmen at the University of California and Cal State University systems will see an average rate of return on their investment of about 12 percent. This is much higher than the 3.9 percent interest rate currently charged on Stafford student loans. In other words, college remains a good investment for the typical entering freshman.

But the 12 percent return is an average. It includes students who develop successful start-ups, students who drop out and students who graduate but don't find work. It includes English and engineering majors, artists and accountants. Some students will earn far greater than 12 percent on their educational investment, and others will end up in financial distress.

Although the average return on the college investment remains high, the recession and higher tuitions have increased the differences in outcomes among college graduates. The growing gaps between the highest- and lowest-earning students means that college has become a more risky investment for prospective freshmen and their families.

Anxious high school seniors can't eliminate the financial risk from investing in education, but they can manage the risk by following a few simple rules:

Consider what comes after graduation. College is a time when students can discover their passions. It's also a time to become aware of the world and how those passions may fit within it. What happens to a particular major's graduates? How do they find professional and personal fulfillment? There are plenty of data on earnings by major on the website for Georgetown University's Center on Education and the Workforce (cew.georgetown.edu), and earnings by occupation from the Bureau of Labor Statistics (bls.gov). Think about how these earnings will compare with a monthly student loan repayment, a figure you can estimate at FinAid.org (finaid.org/calculators/loanpayments.phtml).

Graduate, and do it on time. When considering a particular college, learn what fraction of entering students fail to graduate in four years. If the fraction is more than 15 percent, find out where the obstacles are. Realize that spending a fifth year in college costs extra tuition and a year of forgone earnings. It also leaves you always one year behind in the labor market in terms of experience and promotions.

Be smart about student loans. The federal government offers a variety of plans to repay federal student loans. Graduates with low incomes can qualify for lower loan repayments, and even have debts forgiven after a period of time. Because the programs can be complicated to access, far fewer students who could benefit from these programs actually take advantage of them.

Champions of higher education have long described college as a ticket to the middle class—an automatic route to top jobs with good salaries, benefits and prospects. That's too optimistic. College remains a good investment for the typical student, but it is an investment that carries increasing risks. Fortunately, the risks can be wisely managed. College today shouldn't be considered a surefire ticket to any outcome. It is a steppingstone to be navigated purposefully.

Alan Benson is an assistant professor in the Carlson School of Management at the University of Minnesota; Krishna Esteva is a management consultant; Frank Levy is professor emeritus at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. They are members of the Scholars Strategy Network.

The progressive war on equality

By **JAY AMBROSE**
MCCLATCHY-TRIBUNE NEWS SERVICE

Progressives have a new Armageddon, namely income inequality, and, yes, there are some things to be worried about, not least of all what the progressives themselves will do about it. In the end, you see, many are not really egalitarian at all. They are instead condescending, disdainful, neo-aristocrats who think the ordinary Joe and Jane cannot tie their own shoes without help from Washington.

Mighty mistakes from such stunted attitudes grow. And while you might say that you've never heard liberal politicians talk like that, large numbers of them definitely act like that even as they avoid the sneering, haughty outlandishness of celebrity liberals seeking attention instead of votes.

Michael Moore, the maker of doltish documentaries lucky to get a single fact straight, once said we were "the dumbest people on the planet," that our "stupidity is embarrassing" and even wrote a book called "Stupid White Men ... And Other Sorry Excuses for the State of the Nation." Actually, the book did prove that some slow-witted folks are out there. It made the best-seller list.

Then you come to Bill Maher, the TV comedian who doesn't rattle on just a little about American stupidity, but rattles on to the point

of inanity about American stupidity. I happen to agree that a great many Americans are ill-informed, but I also think they are often the ones that vote for left-wing Democrats and that just as big a threat are ideologues who don't know beans about the real world. Maher is one of those who would like to see something like Medicare for everyone without apparently understanding that Medicare is one of the most frightening fiscal threats this country now has. Would he treat obesity with more sugar in the diet?

On his TV show, Maher does not indulge his bigotry single-handedly, sometimes calling on small-name celebrities to chip in. One was guest David Carr, a liberal New York Times columnist who used the phrase "low-sloping foreheads" to refer to Midwesterners. Any number of writers have that kind of fun. Consider a journalism professor named Stephen Bloom. In an Atlantic magazine article about folks in Iowa, he called them, among other things, "an assortment of waste-oids and meth addicts with pale skin and rotted teeth."

Progressive politicians would never use such language, obviously, but many of them do endorse policies that assume vast incompetence among the inferior, unreliable, hopeless masses. If they did not think like that, they would not employ command-and-control measures that clearly aim to make not just a few decisions for a few of us, but endless decisions for just about

everyone of us. Not infrequently, the liberty-shrinking measures are more hindrance than help.

To address income inequality—and forgetting about equal rights, equal human worth and equality in the way we regard each other—many progressives are gearing up to intervene hurtfully all over again, aiming, for instance, to tell businesses how much they can afford to pay employees when they cannot possibly know and thereby costing many of those employees working hours if not their jobs.

A real problem making us less equal in outcome is fatherless homes that contribute mightily to more school dropouts, more crime, more poverty. It's in part a matter of welfare programs that put wrong incentives in place but is also a sociocultural issue that calls for moral leadership, and here I would like to say that, despite my criticisms, I do recognize some special liberals out there, including one with a well-known name: Oprah Winfrey.






I caught her on a TV show with the pastor T.D. Jakes making powerful pleas for fathers to do the right thing by their children. We need more of that sort of thing.

Jay Ambrose is the former director of editorial policy for Scripps Howard Newspapers, and was editor of The Rocky Mountain News in Denver and the El Paso-Herald Post. Readers may send him email at speaktoday@aol.com.

Satellite image and accompanying information are provided by the National Weather Service. For an updated weather forecast, visit the National Weather Service Guam Homepage: www.prh.noaa.gov/guam/

The Weather

5-Day Forecast for Saipan and Tinian

TODAY	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY
				
Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers. East winds 10 to 20 mph.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.	Partly cloudy with isolated showers.
▲88° ▼76°	▲88° ▼76°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°	▲87° ▼77°

Micronesia

Guam and Rota	Partly Cloudy	▲88 ▼76
Palau	Partly Cloudy	▲88 ▼76
Yap	Mostly Cloudy	▲87 ▼77
Chuuk	Partly Cloudy	▲87 ▼76
Pohnpei	Mostly Cloudy	▲87 ▼77
Kosrae	Mostly Cloudy	▲87 ▼76
Majuro	Mostly Cloudy	▲87 ▼77

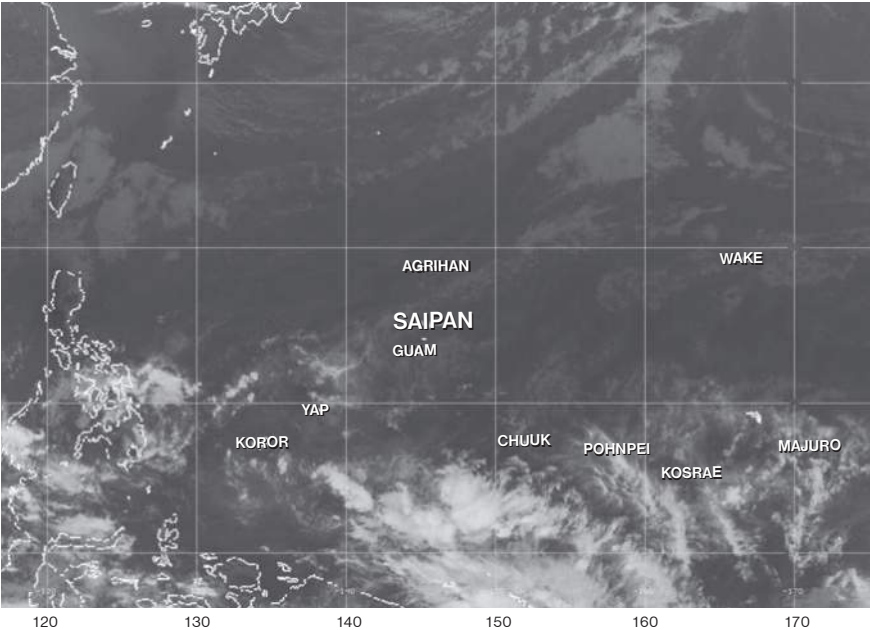
Around The Globe

Auckland	Partly Cloudy	▲76 ▼66
Beijing	Sunny	▲48 ▼20
Hong Kong	Partly Cloudy	▲72 ▼62
Honolulu	Showers	▲79 ▼69
London	Windy	▲50 ▼44
Los Angeles	Mostly Sunny	▲79 ▼50
Manila	Partly Cloudy	▲87 ▼75
Melbourne	Partly Cloudy	▲73 ▼54
Miami	Partly Cloudy	▲84 ▼67
New York	Snow	▲31 ▼14
Osaka	Partly Cloudy	▲53 ▼43
Paris	Showers	▲54 ▼44
Pusan	Cloudy	▲52 ▼38
Rome	Showers	▲59 ▼52
Salem	Partly Cloudy	▲52 ▼39
San Francisco	Mostly Sunny	▲67 ▼48
Seoul	Partly Cloudy	▲44 ▼24
Tokyo	Partly Cloudy	▲49 ▼36
Washington, DC	Showers	▲46 ▼22

Tides

Saipan Harbor			
2:49 AM	Today	Low Tide:	-0.7 Feet
9:43 AM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet
3:22 PM	Today	Low Tide:	1.0 Feet
8:23 PM	Today	High Tide:	2.1 Feet

Yesterday's Satellite Image



PICTURE TIME: 1:00PM, THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 2014
Western North Pacific between equator and 25N from 130E to 180.

A surface trough south of Minami Tori Shima runs southwestward from 22N156E. The trough becomes a shearline at 19N152E and continues southwestward through the Northern Marianas at 16N146E and continues to beyond 9N130E. Scattered showers are found within 60 miles of the trough axis and along and up to 90 miles northwest of the shearline. A near-equatorial trough meanders east and southeastward from south of Mindanao through 3N130E to a circulation centered southwest of Chuuk at 2N148E to end at EQ156E. Scattered showers are occurring south of Koror and Yap within 50 miles of a line running from 6N132E to 5N140E. Scattered showers and isolated thunderstorms are occurring south of a line curving from 6N140E to 5N150E to EQ161E.

Sunrise/Sunset

Today	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Saturday	6:44 AM	5:59 PM
Sunday	6:44 AM	6:00 PM
Monday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM
Tuesday	6:45 AM	6:01 PM

Moonrise/Moonset

Today	8:01 AM	7:57 PM
Saturday	8:54 AM	8:59 PM
Sunday	9:44 AM	9:58 PM
Monday	10:30 AM	10:54 PM
Tuesday	11:15 AM	11:49 PM

GET YOUR PICTURES AND ANNOUNCEMENTS PUBLISHED—FOR FREE

The *Saipan Tribune* accepts for FREE publication the following:

PICTURES

- ISLAND SNAPSHOTS Birthdays, baptisms, christenings, family gatherings, reunions, club activities, and other community-related events.
- BIRTHDAY GREETINGS A way for families and friends to greet their loved ones, accompanied by a picture of the person celebrating his/her birthday.
- BUSINESS Corporate donations, volunteer work, promotions, granting of awards, team-building exercises, meetings and other activities by members of the business community.
- SAMUT SARI Pictures from the islands' Filipino community, primarily focusing on Filipino activities, gatherings, get-togethers, volunteer work, etc.
- TRAVELOGUE Pictures of off-island travels. Contributors may submit up to 10 pictures for consideration.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

- COMMUNITY BRIEFS

Announcements of upcoming activities of organizations, community clubs, government agencies, and private companies.

- CAMPUS BULLETIN Announcements of upcoming activities in public and private schools, as well as calendar of activities. May include PTSA meetings, enrollment procedures.

REQUIREMENTS

For pictures:

- Photos should be original and not copyrighted. Contributors must have the right to allow the *Saipan Tribune* to publish the pictures.
- Digital pictures should be high-resolution (minimum of 800kb).
- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when), the name of contact person, and phone number.
- Photos must have been taken in the last two months.
- For birthday greetings, must be submitted no later than 12 noon of the previous day to make it to next day's edition.

For announcements:

- Must have complete details (who, what, where, when),

the name of contact person, and a phone number.

- Must be submitted no later than 12 noon to make it to next day's edition.

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- E-mail: editor@saipantribune.com or jayvee_vallejera@saipantribune.com.
 - Fax: (670) 235-3740
 - Mail: PMB 34, P.O. Box 10001, Saipan, CNMI 96950
 - Drop off: 2nd Floor, JP Center, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan
- To check if contributions are received, call (670) 235-6397, 235-2440, 235-8747

POLICY

- The *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to accept or reject a contribution for publication; the right to edit all contributions, the date of publication, size of the picture, and page placement; and the right to publish contributions in print, electronic, or other media formats.
- The *Saipan Tribune* will decide how often community announcements are going to be published.
- For Travelogue, the *Saipan Tribune* reserves the right to choose which pictures to publish.

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FLIGHT SCHEDULE AS OF JANUARY 3, 2013

DEPARTURES	ARRIVALS
SAIPAN-GUAM (GUM) UA5070 4:15am 5:05am Daily UA5068 8:40am 9:30am Daily UA5039 1:35pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7 via Rota UA5038 2:20pm 3:10pm 2, 3, 6 UA5078 6:05pm 6:55pm Daily UA5072 9:50pm 10:40pm Daily	GUAM (GUM)-SAIPAN UA5069 2:45am 3:35am Daily UA5071 7:15am 8:05am Daily UA5039 12:10pm 1:00pm 1, 4, 5, 7 UA5038 12:10pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6 via Rota UA5077 4:45pm 5:35pm Daily UA5079 8:30pm 9:20pm Daily
SAIPAN-ROTA (ROP) UA5039 1:35pm 2:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7	GUAM (GUM)-ROTA (ROP) UA5038 12:10pm 12:45pm 2, 3, 6
ROTA (ROP)-GUAM (GUM) UA5039 2:40pm 3:10pm 1, 4, 5, 7	ROTA (ROP)-SAIPAN UA5038 1:15pm 1:50pm 2, 3, 6
SAIPAN-OSAKA (KIX) OZ119 4:00am 6:40am Daily	OSAKA (KIX)-SAIPAN OZ120 9:50pm 2:20am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-NARITA (NRT) DL287 6:00am 8:40am Daily DL297 4:30pm 7:20pm Daily	NARITA (NRT)-SAIPAN DL298 10:25am 3:00pm Daily DL288 8:55pm 1:30am+1 Daily
SAIPAN-BUSAN (PUS) OZ608 3:10am 6:20am 1, 4, 5, 7	BUSAN (PUS)-SAIPAN OZ607 9:00pm 1:50am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-SEOUL (ICN) OZ606 2:10am 6:00am 1 D2102 2:20am 5:50am 3 OZ606 2:40am 6:30am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 OZ6063 3:30am 7:20am 4, 7 (will increase eff Jan 29) D2104 2:00pm 5:30pm 6 OZ604 3:20pm 7:10pm Daily	SEOUL (ICN)-SAIPAN D2101 8:30am 2:00pm 3 OZ603 9:00am 2:20pm Daily D2103 7:30pm 1:00am+1 6 OZ605 7:40pm 1:00am+1 7 OZ605 8:10pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 OZ6053 9:10pm 2:30am+1 3, 6 (will increase eff Jan 29)
SAIPAN-SHANGHAI (PVG) 3U8648 6:10am 8:40am 1, 4, 5, 7	SHANGHAI (PVG)-SAIPAN 3U8647 10:40pm 5:00am+1 3, 4, 6, 7
SAIPAN-BEIJING (PEK) MU764 4:00am 8:00am 1, 5	BEIJING (PEK)-SAIPAN MU763 7:20pm 3:00am+1 4, 7
SAIPAN-GUANGZHOU (CAN) 3U8646 4:20am 7:30am 2, 6	GUANGZHOU (CAN)-SAIPAN 3U8645 7:40pm 3:00am+1 1, 5
SAIPAN-MANILA (MNL) OZ606/701 2:10am 11:15am 1 via ICN OZ606/701 2:40am 11:15am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5070/191 4:15am 9:05am 3, 6 via GUM DL287/473 6:00am 10:55pm Daily via NRT UA5068/PR111 8:40am 4:45pm 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM UA5039/183 1:35pm 9:30pm 5 via Guam UA5039/183 1:35pm 9:50pm 1, 4, 7 via Guam UA5038/183 2:20pm 9:30pm 2 via GUM UA5078/183 6:05pm 9:50pm 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM OZ604/703 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN	MANILA (MNL)-SAIPAN OZ704/603 12:10am 2:20pm Daily PR110/UA5072 7:35am 5:35pm 1, 3, 5, 6, 7 via GUM DL172/288 7:45am 1:30am+1 Daily via NRT UA190/5077 9:55am 5:35pm 2, 7 via Guam UA190/5079 10:00am 5:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ702/605 12:30pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA184/5071 10:55pm 8:05am+1 1, 3, 4, 6, 7 via GUM UA184/5071 11:59pm 8:05am+1 2, 5 via GUM
SAIPAN-HONG KONG (HKG) OZ606/721 2:10am 11:50am 1 via ICN OZ606/721 2:40am 11:50am 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7 via ICN UA5068/179 8:40am 10:35pm 1, 5 via GUM UA5038/179 2:20pm 10:35pm 3, 6 via GUM OZ604/749 3:20pm 11:00pm Daily via ICN	HONG KONG (HKG)-SAIPAN OZ746/603 12:30am 2:20pm Daily via ICN OZ722/605 1:15pm 1:00am+1 7 via ICN OZ724/605 1:50pm 1:30am+1 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6 via ICN UA180/5071 11:10pm 8:05am+1 1, 3, 5, 6 via GUM

LEGEND: Days: Monday (1), Tuesday (2), Wednesday (3), Thursday (4), Friday (5), Saturday (6) and Sunday (7); 3U: Sichuan Airlines; MU: China Eastern; UA: United Airlines; DL: Delta Airlines; OZ: Asiana; VLK: Vladivostok Air; SYL: Yakutia Air; D: Dynamic Airways.

ETD: Estimated Time of Departure; ETA: Estimated Time of Arrival. The *Saipan Tribune* is not responsible for any changes in the schedule.)

FREEDOM AIR FLIGHT SCHEDULE

Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency	Airline	ETD	ETA	Frequency
Guam-Rota				FRE 115	13:00	13:10	Daily
FRE 100	7:30	8:00	Daily	FRE 117	14:30	14:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan				FRE 119	16:00	16:10	Daily
FRE 100	8:20	8:50	Daily	FRE 121	16:40	16:50	Daily
Guam-Rota				FRE 123	17:40	17:50	Daily
FRE 300	17:00	17:30	Daily	FRE 125	18:30	18:40	Daily
Rota-Saipan							
FRE 100	17:50	18:20	Daily				
Saipan-Rota				Tinian-Saipan			
FRE 200	9:30	10:00	Daily	FRE 102	7:05	7:15	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 104	7:50	8:00	Daily
FRE 400	10:20	10:45	Daily	FRE 106	8:20	8:30	Daily
Saipan-Rota				FRE 108	9:00	9:10	Daily
FRE 400	18:55	19:25	Daily	FRE 110	10:00	10:10	Daily
Rota-Guam				FRE 112	11:05	11:15	Daily
FRE 400	19:40	20:10	Daily	FRE 114	12:00	12:10	Daily
Saipan-Tinian				FRE 116	13:30	13:40	Daily
FRE 101	6:45	6:55	Daily	FRE 118	14:50	15:00	Daily
FRE 103	7:30	7:40	Daily	FRE 120	16:20	16:30	Daily
FRE 105	8:00	8:10	Daily	FRE 122	17:00	17:10	Daily
FRE 107	8:40	8:50	Daily	FRE 124	18:05	18:15	Daily
FRE 109	9:10	9:20	Daily	FRE 126	18:50	19:00	Daily
FRE 111	10:45	10:55	Daily				



NMI CRIME STOPPERS

Anonymous tips can now be submitted through the following:

- Call 234-7272 (PARA) on any telephone
- *11 on any PTI cellular phone
- Log on to the internet at www.nmicrimestoppers.com

PACIFIC CENTURY FELLOWS

P R O G R A M

Marianas Chapter

Be part of the solution. Become a Fellow.

The PCF Marianas Chapter is a non-profit, leadership development program that runs for one year incorporating periodic sessions covering current issues facing the CNMI.

Bright minds brought together can make a world of difference. With the challenges we face in our CNMI, there has never been a greater need for leaders to start working better together.

IMPORTANT DATES:

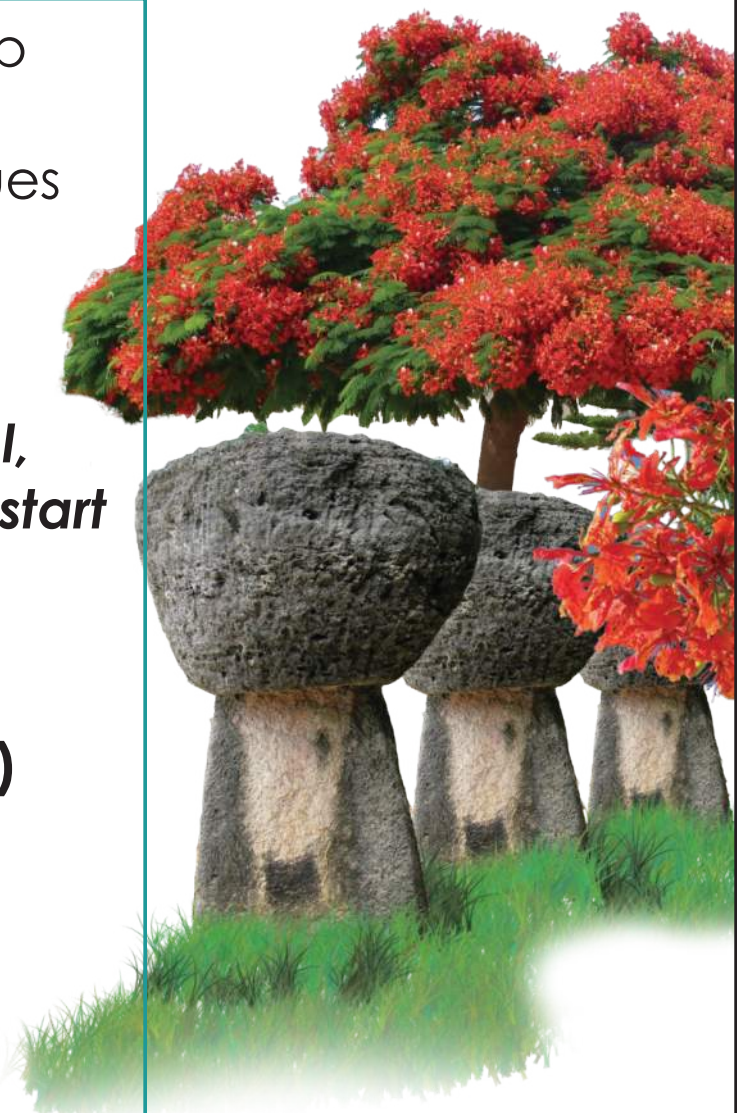
- ♦ January 7th: Application deadline (**extended**)
- ♦ January 18th: Selection Saturday
- ♦ February 7-8th: Mandatory Weekend Retreat

REQUIREMENTS:

- ♦ Must be between the ages of 25-45
- ♦ Submit completed application
- ♦ Provide two (2) letters of recommendation
- ♦ Must be able to attend the Selection Saturday and the Weekend Retreat.

A tuition fee is assessed following selection to cover fellowship expenses for the entire year. Financial assistance is available, see website for details.

To request an application or for more information please visit our website at www.pcf-marianas.com or contact Maggie Sablan or Merlie Tolentino at 234-0609 ext 117 or 118 or send an email to administrator@pcf-marianas.com.



“Fellows will be in an environment that will foster open mindedness, creativity and constructive problem solving...Fellows will be better able to lead, not only in their respective industries, but in the bigger picture of the communities they serve and the islands in which they live.”

2014: Defining challenges

Dazed over the vicious slams of the year just past, we retreat to reset buttons to see if there's any iota of hope left to stimulate economic growth. The urgency is obvious: steady and significant decline in revenue generation. It's basically a very uninspiring year and 2014 doesn't look any better either.

Cuts in pension pay, budgetary shortfall for this purpose, and piles of debts with CUC are serious indications of a woefully wobbly fiscal posture. Whatever happened to the gusto of "better times?"

The fiscal setback prompts the need to do due diligence in what's known as "fiscal gap"—future expenditure versus future receipts. What and how will we do it to stimulate economic growth this year is the defining challenge of 2014.

Stagnant income vs increases

While the boys are resting on their laurels—apathy land—perhaps it's just as well that we jolt their senses on what they have done to improve the stagnancy or lack of increase in employees' income? While there are slated increases in health premiums and deductibles, power bills, cost of food, etc. income remains the same. The 40-percent increase in health premiums has forced a lot of employees to terminate their policies.

At day's end, the impending increases would further rob families of their purchasing power while Capital Hill snoozes. It includes folks who are underemployed—employees with jobs whose income fall within the federal definition of poverty income level—and others who haven't seen any increase in salaries for the last decade. Isn't it your fiduciary duty to improve their lot or income?

The negligence—failure to improve the livelihood of the multitude—literally seals self-inflicted political doom or triumph in darkness for failing the real challenge to fulfilling fiduciary duty.

Must wake up to reality

Policymakers can't continue humming their favorite nursery rhyme *Are You Sleeping*. Not when the CNMI is getting torched to ashes by the merciless magma of bankruptcy at every corner. Appalling the urgency of the issue that seems stuck in mediocrity or apathy land.

There's a definitive and urgent need to review and remove the

carcasses of dead, predatory, and regressive policies as we envision the next steps ahead. For instance, is there a need to raise taxes (no mulcting please), cut spending to skeletal level, or forging a combination of these to equal some 10 percent of GDP? It's a highly sensitive undertaking given that the goal is to revive investment rather than force its final closure as a result of unintended consequences.

Indeed, our holy grail—tourism—indicates an upward spiral in visitor arrival. We hail it but ever wary that it is a highly volatile industry. The power check between China and Japan could send the upwards spiral the other way.

"Given that there are so many factors that could determine how well the visitor industry does in the coming years, like airline seat capacity, exchange rates, and the health of the global economy, nothing is certain in the fortuneteller's cards," according to Lowell Kalapa in his column in the *Hawaii Reporter*.

While the Aloha State does well in most economic ventures, ours is less than stellar as a place to do business as evidenced by the huge closure of large, and most recently, small businesses. The business climate is bad given the high cost of utilities that has literally killed marginal firms.

Economic engine sputtering

The exodus of foreign capital in recent past is a huge figure we can't replace anytime soon. In brief, we're always capital-short, meaning the NMI needs constant infusion of capital (money) in order to create jobs and financial prosperity to keep the economic engine humming.

This isn't happening today. Quick fixes like casino, costly energy programs, or tax exemption through the infamous QC program are but gimmicks that produce little in return versus their high cost.

The fiscal disaster is a tale of negligence in fiduciary duty that has finally caught up with unbridled spending habits that has piled up into far less for far more. The persistent exodus of foreign capital exacerbates revenue decline beyond our wildest imaginings.

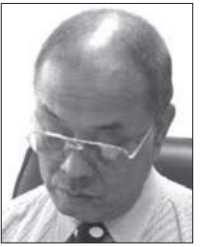
The economic disaster and its debilitating effects against the purchasing power of families are leadership's dominant feature and halo on its plate. How do families deal with this monstrosity?

Have they lifted a finger to rework carcasses of dead and regressive policies to reset the button of reinvestments here? If so, what

By **JOHN S. DELROSARIO JR.**

Special to the Saipan Tribune

John DelRosario Jr. is a former publisher of the Saipan Tribune and a former secretary of the Department of Public Lands.



are they and have they organized developmental programs to benefit governance? Or is mediocrity its guiding star, thus the persistent and significant loss in revenues?

Gubernatorial contest

This year also reins in the 2014 gubernatorial race to which I'd be worried sick if I were an incumbent in office now. I mean, how do you quell the angst of some 3,000 retirees and their families? How do you justify the skyrocketing spikes in power bills? What's your answer for implementing the fraudulent Obamacare that has morphed into Nobamacare? How do you mitigate the impending increases in basic commodities amidst huge losses in the family purchasing power?

The hardship imposed by the constant increases in the cost of living throughout the archipelago makes for difficult navigation of the treacherous seas of this year's election.

Interesting query: what would be their narrative? Could they sufficiently muster the energy to make voters crawl on broken glass to re-elect them or would they quickly lose what's a foregone conclusion? It's how well you do to ease economic hardship that defines this year and your future. If you've failed, then you've sealed your doom.

■ ■ ■

In moments of solitude, I often quiz if my views need to slide into "political niceties" partaking in cheering the fatal effects of the "do-nothing" bunch. Difficult the task may be, it remains a matter of conscience and responsibility to "tell it like it is." I take pride in our people who've learned when to say "No Mas!"

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Irving R. Borden: The passing of a long-time resident of Micronesia and Saipan

Irving Randall Borden, one of the kindest and most generous persons I have ever known, and who was instrumental in the development of the English Program in Micronesia and the Northern Marianas during Trust Territory days, recently passed away. Surrounded by his family, Irving died peacefully in his sleep on Dec. 9, 2013, in Benton City, Washington after a long battle with melanoma.

Irving's introduction to Micronesia was in the Marshall Islands, where he served in the U.S. Navy in the late 1950s. After his military tour of duty, he earned a degree in education and became one of the first members of the U.S. Peace Corps, serving in Borneo. After completion of his Peace Corps tour, Irving returned to the States and earned a master's degree in English and a pilot's license. He then returned to the Marshall Islands as an English specialist and worked in the training and supervision of Peace Corps English teachers, later moving to Chuuk to supervise the English Program there.

In the 1970s, Irving left Chuuk and moved to Saipan to work in the Marianas District Department of Education. On Saipan he initially supervised a special English Program at Hopwood Jr. High School, and then later transferred to Marianas High School to teach English. After retiring from the CNMI Public School System in the 1980s, Irving flew for Freedom Air. Some readers might be Irving's

former students at MHS; others might be Tinian residents who recall flying with Irving as he tirelessly piloted the small Freedom Air commuter aircraft on multiple flights daily between Saipan and Tinian.

In 1980 Irving married Jane Aguon and adopted her two children, Mae and Rhiner.

Irving left Saipan in 1999 and moved to Chesaw, Washington, located in Okanogan County. There he built a house on a wooded, five-acre plot in a very remote rural area. He spent his last years tending to trees and neighbors, relishing times of quiet. When it became apparent that living in snow country on mountainous roads far from medical services was difficult and dangerous, he listened to the urgings of his family and moved to Benton City, where he was lovingly cared for by his six sisters and their families.

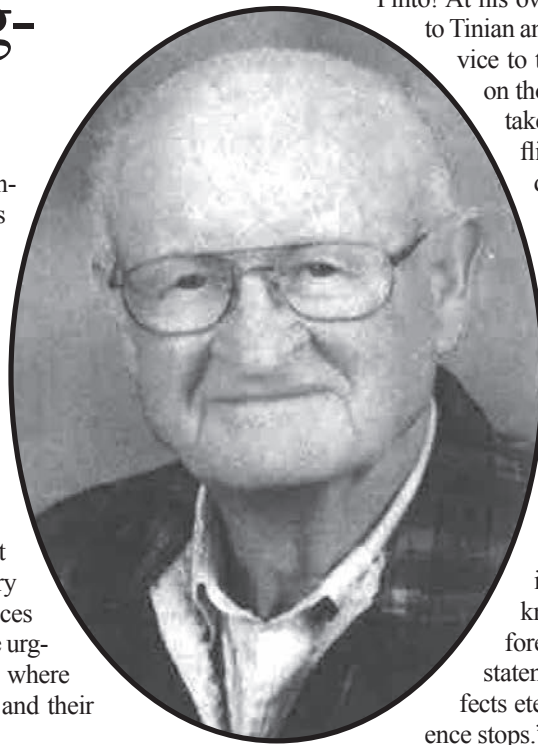
Irving was quite an uncommon person. At one time during his residence on Saipan, he owned four separate means of transportation: a horse, a boat, a motorcycle, and a two-seater Cessna

airplane. The only thing missing was a car. An interesting irony, however, is that he eventually replaced the horse with a car—a Ford

Pinto! At his own expense, Irving flew his small plane to Tinian and Rota from time to time to provide service to the educational project he administered

on those two islands. Occasionally, he would take a co-worker with him on his short flight to Tinian, but never to Rota; he deemed that trip (which he navigated by dead-reckoning) too dangerous to risk another's life and always donned a life jacket before taking off from Tinian and heading to Rota. He pastured his horse in the vacant field that is now occupied by the Commonwealth Health Center.

My deep friendship with Irving endured for over 45 years, since I first met him in the Marshall Islands in 1968. He was, without a doubt, one of the nicest, kindest, and most unassuming human beings anyone could ever know. I like to think that Irving, first and foremost a teacher, would appreciate this statement from Henry Adams: "A teacher affects eternity, he can never tell where his influence stops."



Ed Klingbergs

Chalan Galaide, Saipan

Let us stop corruption in government!

In my last letter to the editor titled "My prediction," I promised readers that I will share some hard facts where hundreds of thousands of dollars, if not millions, of our CNMI taxpayer money is being paid out without proper and necessary documentation.

One discovery is the selective payment of land compensation. Don't get me wrong. I am wholeheartedly in support for all landowners to be justly compensated for their lands taken by our government for public purposes pursuant to our Constitution and laws. They deserve to be paid 100 percent of their claims! The NMI Administrative Code specifically established the land compensation claims rules and regulations for the processing of claims and methods of disbursement of monetary compensation. Eulogio Inos failed to ensure that these rules and regulations are adhered to under his watch!

In one of my discoveries, an elderly landowner was deceived for

political gamesmanship whereby in March 2009, the then Secretary of Finance, Eulogio Inos, ordered the release of payment, some hundreds of thousands of dollars, for land compensation settlement without ensuring that all proper and required documentations are in place. In March 2009 he stated that "details regarding this claim and settlement are on file with the Department of Public Lands." He lied! There isn't any settlement agreement on file. On April 2009, Eulogio Inos was elevated to the position of lieutenant governor. Almost three years later, on Jan. 10, 2012, DPL tried to cover up Eulogio Inos' mistake by attempting to make the elderly landowner sign a settlement agreement that would have cheated the elderly landowner from getting full land compensation. To this day, no settlement agreement has been signed by the elderly landowner, his full compensation has not been paid, and but for my discovery, hundreds of thousands of dollars are out the door and no one will ever

know except Eulogio Inos and those who tried to cover it up. That's "IT"! How many more taxpayer dollars are being funneled through the back door under Eulogio Inos' watch? Can you guess?

This year 2014 is another general election. Eulogio Inos should do the right thing and compensate the landowners whose lands have been taken, but he must not do "IT" again for his political gamesmanship!

For "Miniakis" who will forever be a naysayer and a pessimist who continues to hide behind a computer, my magic rubber ball predicts that you will continue to spill your pessimistic attitude and hatred toward Jesus, no matter what. Therefore, I suggest you drink some more milk.

Jesus I. Taisague

Koblerville, Saipan

Island Snapshots

CHRISTMAS PARTY



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Marissa E. Obtinalla is presented with the 15-Year Service Award by McDonald's Saipan president/owner Jose C. Ayuyu and store general manager Marcia E. Ayuyu.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Emmanuel L. Vital is presented with the 20-year Service Award by McDonald's Saipan president/owner Jose C. Ayuyu and store general manager Marcia E. Ayuyu.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Crisanta D. Daliva is presented with the 20-year Service Award by McDonald's Saipan president/owner Jose C. Ayuyu and store general manager Marcia E. Ayuyu.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
McDonald's Saipan's main store employees present a dance number during the recent Christmas party that MacDonald's Saipan hosted for its employees and officials.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO
Employees of McDonald's Garapan branch perform a dance number during the company's recent Christmas party.

BIRTHDAY SHOUTOUTS



Happy birthday to the most loving mother and supportive wife, Vanessa Kisa-Camacho! May each and every passing year bring you wisdom, peace and cheer. May this day bring to you all things that make you smile. Whatever your dreams, whether big or small, may this year be memorable in which you have them all fulfilled. God bless and we love you! Greetings coming out from Shalei and Daddy.

Happy 4th birthday to Kayven Xane King Cruz! May your day be filled with lots of love, joy and fun. You have been a wonderful blessing since the day you were born and you continue to build more love in our lives. We love you. Greetings come from Mom, Dad, and your lil' brother Junior.



Happy 1st birthday to our little diva, Jervanny Lynn Attao Babauta! We love you since the day you first came into our lives and we will continue to love you always you truly are a great blessing and may the Lord continue to guide and bless you always! Love, Mommy, Daddy, Princess, and Baby D.

Happy 1st birthday to Ymani Darieus Camacho! May the Lord continue to guide and bless you today and forever. Love, Mommy.



Bank of Guam offers \$10K in college scholarships

HAGATNA, Guam—Bank of Guam announced yesterday that applications are now available for its 2014 IFIT Scholarship Program, which makes \$2,000 available for five graduating high school seniors to attend a

» 5 awardees to receive \$2,000 each plus paid summer internship

U.S. accredited four-year college or university. The scholarship also includes a paid summer internship at the bank's

branches.

To be eligible for the program, applicants must:

1. Reside in Guam, the CNMI,

Palau, Republic of the Marshall Islands, Federated States of Micronesia, or San Francisco, California;

2. Be high school seniors, Class of 2014 (copies of transcripts and SAT/ACT scores required);

3. Submit the original, numbered application by March 14, 2014, to Bank of Guam, ATTN: Marketing Department;

4. Submit three letters of recommendation, one from a reference of choice; and

5. Submit answers to four essay questions.

The scholarship will be available for use at any four-year U.S. accredited college or university. Eight semifinalists will be selected by April and will then be required to submit additional documents, including an acceptance letter to a U.S. accredited four-year college or

university.

Last year's awardees were graduates of Guam's Academy of Our Lady of Guam and Father Duenas Memorial School. Additionally, graduates from Saipan's Kagman High School, Marianas Baptist Academy, and Grace Christian Academy won the scholarships and paid internships.

Applications are available at all Bank of Guam branches, Customer Service Department in Hagatna Branch Lobby and Marketing Department. They have also been distributed to Guam's high schools. Only originals will be accepted. **(BOG)**



A GIFT OF BOOTS

Members of the Guam Army National Guard's 1st Battalion, 294th Infantry Regiment—Staff Sgt. Erico Santos, left, and Sgt. 1st Class Frank J. Limtiaco—donate Task Force Guam's first batch of boots to Patrick McCafferty, a retired Canadian Army warrant officer who helps run an Afghan security company that's improperly outfitted with footwear. McCafferty, founder of *Operation Walking Tall*, sought Guam's assistance and the Soldiers responded with more than 120 pairs of boots. "This is the biggest donation we've gotten since we started the program two years ago," McCafferty said Dec. 25 at Camp Phoenix, Kabul, Afghanistan.

SGT. EDDIE SIGUENZA

CONGRATULATIONS!

CNMI national swimmer Rezne Wong graduated from the University of Hawaii in Manoa with a Bachelor of Science in Marine Biology last Dec. 21, 2013. He is seen here on graduation day posing with his parents, Eli and Millet, and younger brother Elnathan.

CONTRIBUTED PHOTO



Supreme Court upholds disturbing the peace conviction

The Supreme Court issued *Commonwealth v. Duan Sheng Hong*, which affirmed Duan Sheng Hong's conviction for disturbing the peace. The High Court addressed two issues: (1) the Commonwealth's post-discovery, pre-trial disclosure of letters written by Hong, and (2) the trial court's admission of the letters and testimony of an FBI agent into evidence.

Hong argued for reversal on the ground that the Commonwealth's production of let-

ters about a month before trial violated his due process rights under *Brady v. Maryland*, 373 U.S. 83 (1963). *Brady* requires the government to give a defendant evidence that would help his or her case. Hong further argued that the court failed to consider the prejudicial and probative impact of both the letters and the FBI agent's testimony, violating Commonwealth Rule of Evidence 403, which requires courts to weigh the probative and prejudicial effect of evi-

dence before its admission.

The Commonwealth disagreed. It maintained the letters, which were written by Hong himself, were not helpful to his defense and that, in any event, Hong had adequate time to review the letters before trial. Therefore, no *Brady* violation occurred. The Commonwealth also asserted the trial court considered the prejudicial and probative effects of the letters and testimony.

The High Court agreed with

the Commonwealth. The Court held (1) no *Brady* violation occurred because Hong had over three weeks to review the six pages of letters he wrote, and (2) no error transpired because the trial court implicitly considered the prejudicial and probative impact of the letters and FBI agent's testimony.

The Supreme Court's full opinion is *Commonwealth v. Duan Sheng Hong*, 2013 MP 19, and can be found at <http://www.justice.gov.mp/>. **(NMI Judiciary)**

...and affirms sexual abuse of minor conviction

The Commonwealth Supreme Court affirmed the conviction of Jonathan M. Diaz, a former teacher at Tinian Junior High, for three counts of sexual abuse of a minor who had been a student at the school. Diaz had appealed his conviction, arguing the evidence was insufficient to support a conviction and the bench trial violated his federal constitutional right to a jury trial.

Diaz's sufficiency argument centered around two issues:

First, that the government had not proven that sexual abuse occurred and, second, that Diaz was not in a position of authority in relation to the minor. The High Court disagreed on both points. The Court found sufficient evidence of sexual abuse because the minor had testified that she had had "sex" with Diaz and later clarified she had had "sexual intercourse" with Diaz.

The Supreme Court also found Diaz was in a position of

authority in relation to a minor because he was a teacher at the same school as the minor. It did not matter that the two met during the summer or that Diaz was a junior high teacher while she was a high school student because Diaz held coercive power over the minor by virtue of his position.

Diaz's final argument focused on whether the Commonwealth's system of having bench trials for lesser offenses violates the federal Constitu-

tion. The High Court determined it did not. In doing so, the justices highlighted that the question has long been settled. Commonwealth case law has consistently found the bench trial system constitutionally acceptable for nearly three decades while federal case law has permitted the system for over a century.

The Supreme Court's full opinion is *Commonwealth v. Diaz*, 2013 MP 20. **(NMI Judiciary)**

Registration for NMC spring 2014 semester begins Jan. 13

Registration for the Northern Marianas College's upcoming spring 2014 semester will begin on Monday, Jan. 13, and run through Thursday, Jan. 16, 2014. Students can register on the day designated for their PowerCampus ID number during registration week. Late registration is on Friday, Jan. 17, 2014.

The deadline to apply for admission for the spring 2014 semester was Dec. 20, 2013. However, the college will be making an exception for those who attend the upcoming NMC information session on Tuesday, Jan. 7, 2014, when admission applications for the spring 2014 semester will be accepted.

Note that new students and returning students (those who did not take courses at NMC during the previous semester) are required to take the English and Math placement tests before they register. Placement test dates are scheduled for 9am on Jan. 6, 7, and 10, 2014. Students may schedule to take the placement tests by contacting acting testing coordinator Queanna Sablan at 237-6774/6790 or visiting the Testing Center in Building I.

New and returning students are also required to attend a student orientation in order to register for courses. It is highly recommended that students confirm which orientation they will be attending by contacting Sablan at 237-6774/6790 or emailing queanna.sablan@marianas.edu

marianas.edu.

After taking the placement tests and attending student orientation, students can meet with their academic advisors, who will assist students complete registration forms and create class schedules. Students may register between 9am and 6pm Monday through Friday during registration week.

Ongoing students must obtain registration clearance at the Finance Office, the NMC Library and/or Office of Admissions and Records before they can register for classes. To find out if any holds exist, students can visit the Office of Admissions and Records in Building N or call 237-6768/6769/6771.

NMC offers several degree programs, including a bachelor of science degree in education (emphasis on elementary education, early childhood education, special education, or rehabilitation and human services), associate degrees in business, business administration (emphasis on accounting, business management, or computer applications), liberal arts, nursing, natural resources management, criminal justice, and hospitality management. Moreover, it offers short-term certificate programs in different vocational, academic, and professional areas.

For additional information or inquiries, contact the Office of Admissions and Records at 237-6768/6769/6771 or visit www.marianas.edu. **(NMC)**

IMPORTANT DATES

■ **Jan. 7:** NMC information session (5:30pm-6:30pm, Room D-1)

■ **Jan. 8:** Student orientation for new and returning students (6pm-8:30pm, Room D-1)

■ **Jan. 9:** Student orientation for new and returning students (9am-11:30am, Room D-1)

■ **Jan. 10:** Early registration for spring 2014 graduation candidates and students under Disability Support Services

■ **Jan. 13:** Registration for

students with PowerCampus ID #s 000000138 through 000014370

■ **Jan. 14:** Registration for students with PowerCampus ID #s 000014371 through 000017530

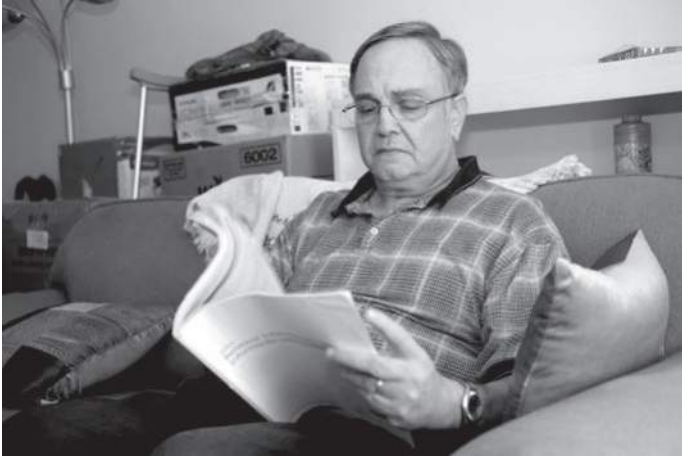
■ **Jan. 15:** Registration for students with PowerCampus ID #s 000017531 through 000019617

■ **Jan. 16:** Registration for new, re-admitted, and ongoing students and students with PowerCampus ID #s 000019618 or Higher

■ **Jan. 17:** Late registration

Business

New year means new challenges for health care law



AP

Howard Kraft discusses signing up for health insurance as he sits in his Lincolnton, N.C. home Monday, Dec. 30, 2013.

WASHINGTON (AP)—This could be the year that things finally turn around for President Barack Obama's health care law. Yet it could start with another round of glitches that vex consumers and leave Republicans crowing, "We told you so."

The law's major benefits take effect with the new year, along with an unpopular insurance mandate and the risk of more nerve-racking coverage

disruptions.

Big improvements are in store for some, including Howard Kraft of Lincolnton, N.C. A painful spinal problem left him unable to work as a hotel bellman. But he's got coverage because federal law now forbids insurers from turning away people with health problems.

"I am not one of these people getting a policy because I'm being made to," Kraft said. "I need

one to stay alive."

What's good for millions like Kraft is secured through what others see as an imposition: requiring virtually every American to get covered, through an employer, a government program or direct purchase of a plan.

But the biggest health care headlines early this year could come from continued uncertainty over the insurance program's messy rollout.

The consumer-facing side of the HealthCare.gov website appears to be largely fixed—with 2.1 million enrolled through federal and state websites. But on the back end, insurers say

they are still receiving thousands of erroneous sign-ups from the government.

That means early in the year insured patients could go for a medication refill—or turn up in the emergency room—only to be told there is no record of their coverage.

One of the main worries is over certain error-tainted enrollment records that insurers call "orphans" and "ghosts."

"Orphans" are sign-ups that the government has a record of, but they do not appear in insurer systems. Insurers say those customers never left the government's "orphanage" to "go and live" with

the carrier they selected.

"Ghosts" are new customers that the insurer does have a record of, but whose information mysteriously does not appear in the government's computers.

The Obama administration says the rate of such errors has been reduced dramatically, and insurers agree. The catch is that the volume of sign-ups has surged in the meantime, which means even with a lower error rate the number of problem cases keeps growing. And there is no automated way to clear up mistakes quickly.

"There are going to be problems for any number of people

who thought they had signed up, and it won't work right off the bat," said Mark McClellan, who oversaw the rollout of Medicare's prescription drug benefit—a program that also had its share of issues. "It would be particularly disruptive for people in the midst of treatment."

Anticipating disruptions, major drug store chains like CVS and Walgreens have announced they will help customers who face coverage glitches, even providing temporary supplies of medications without insisting on up-front payment. Many smaller independent pharmacies are also ready to help.

Legal recreational pot industry opens in Colorado



AP

Employees help customers at the crowded sales counter inside Medicine Man marijuana retail store, which opened as a legal recreational retail outlet in Denver on Wednesday Jan. 1, 2014.

Nations jockey for Arctic position, US not in lead

WASHINGTON (AP)—The U.S. is racing to keep pace with stepped-up activity in the once sleepy Arctic frontier, but it is far from being in the lead.

Nations across the world are hurrying to stake claims to the Arctic's resources, which might be home to 13 percent of the world's undiscovered oil and 30 percent of its untapped natural gas. There are emerging fisheries and hidden minerals. Cruise liners loaded with tourists are sailing the Arctic's frigid waters in increasing numbers. Cargo traffic along the Northern Sea Route, one of two shortcuts across the top of the Earth in summer, is on the rise.

The U.S., which takes over the two-year rotating chairmanship of the eight-nation Arctic Council in 2015, has not ignored the Arctic, but critics say the U.S. is lagging behind the other seven: Russia, Norway, Sweden, Finland, Iceland, Canada and Denmark, through the semiautonomous territory of Greenland.

"On par with the other Arctic nations, we are behind—behind in our thinking, behind in our vision," Sen. Lisa Murkowski, R-Alaska, said. "We lack basic infrastructure, basic funding commitments to be prepared for the level of activity expected in the Arctic."

At a meeting before Thanksgiving with Secretary of State John Kerry, Murkowski suggested he name a U.S. ambassador or envoy to the Arctic—someone who could

coordinate work on the Arctic being done by more than 20 federal agencies and take the lead on increasing U.S. activities in the region.

Murkowski is trying to get Americans to stop thinking that the Arctic is just Alaska's problem. "People in Iowa and New Hampshire need to view the U.S. as an Arctic nation. Otherwise when you talk about funding, you're never going to get there," Murkowski said. She added that even non-Arctic nations are deeply engaged: "India and China are investing in icebreakers."

The U.S. has three aging icebreakers.

The melting Arctic also is creating a new front of U.S. security concerns.

Earlier this month, Russian President Vladimir Putin said expanding Russia's military presence in the Arctic was a top priority for his nation's armed forces. Russia this year began rehabilitating a Soviet-era base at the New Siberian Islands and has pledged to restore a number of Arctic military air bases that fell into neglect after the 1991 collapse of the Soviet Union.

Putin said he doesn't envision a conflict between Russia and the United States, both of which have called for keeping the Arctic a peaceful zone. But he added, "Experts know quite well that it takes U.S. missiles 15 to 16 minutes to reach Moscow from the Barents Sea," which is a part of the Arctic Ocean near Russia's shore.

DENVER (AP)—Crowds were serenaded by live music as they waited for the nation's first legal recreational pot shops to open. They ate doughnuts and funnel cakes as a glass-blower made smoking pipes. Some tourists even rode around in a limo, eager to try weed but not so eager to be seen buying it.

And when the sales began, those who bought the drug emerged from the stores, receipt held high and carrying sealed shopping bags, to cheers.

"I'm going to frame the receipt when I go home, to remind myself of what might be possible: Legal everywhere," said musician James Aaron Ramsey, 28, who did some time in jail for pot possession in Missouri and played folk tunes with his guitar for those in line.

Activists hope he's right, and that the experiment in Colorado will prove to be a better alternative to the costly American-led

drug war, produce the kind of revenue that state officials hope and save the government costs in locking up drug offenders.

Just on the first day, prices in some places rose to more than \$500 an ounce, and some shops announced midafternoon they would close early because of short supply. It's too soon to say whether the price spikes and long lines will persist.

Washington state will open its pot industry later this year. Both states' programs will be watched closely not just by officials in other states, but by activists and governments in other countries because the industries will be the first to regulate the production and sale of the drug.

Some countries have decriminalized the drug, and the Netherlands lets people buy and sell it, but it's illegal to grow or process it.

Just as shops opened Wednes-

day, the Denver Police Department tweeted, "Do you know the law?" and linked to city websites on state and local laws that include bans on public consumption, driving under the influence, taking marijuana out of state and giving pot to anyone under 21.

Denver police said one person was issued a summons for public consumption. The Colorado State Patrol reported no pot-related incidents. No pot-related incidents were reported at Denver International Airport, where signs warned travelers that they can't take the drug home.

At least 24 pot shops in eight towns opened. In Denver, pot users welcomed the new year and the new industry by firing up bongos and cheering in a cloud of marijuana smoke at a 1920s-themed "Prohibition Is Over" party—a reference to the 1930s-era law that outlawed marijuana.

Shopper Jacob Elliott said he wrote reports in college about the need to end pot prohibition, but never thought it could happen in his lifetime.

"This breaks that barrier," said Elliott, who traveled to Colorado from Leesburg, Va., to be among the first to buy legal weed.

Preparation for the retail market started more than a year ago, soon after Colorado and Washington voters in 2012 approved legal pot industries. Uruguay passed a law in December to become the first nation to regulate pot, but regulatory system isn't in place yet.

Pot advocates, who had long pushed legalization as an alternative to the drug war, had argued it would generate revenue for state coffers—and in Colorado's case to support education—and save money by not locking up low-level drug offenders.

Nation

2014's first big storm bears down on northeast US

HARTFORD, Conn. (AP)—A winter storm is bearing down on the northeast, promising heavy snows, strong winds and bitter temperatures that will make commutes hazardous for the first work day of the new year.

Snow began falling overnight in parts of New England and New York but the real brunt of the storm wasn't expected to hit until later Thursday. As much as a foot of snow or more was forecast for some areas overnight Thursday into Friday, and temperatures were expected to plummet, with some areas seeing highs just above zero, the National Weather Service said.

"There will be travel problems," said Hugh Johnson, a National Weather Service meteorologist in Albany, N.Y. "It will be very cold."

Up to 14 inches of snow is forecast for the Boston area and the National Weather Service issued a blizzard warning for Long Island—where 8 to 10 inches of snow could fall and winds could gust up to 45 mph—from Thursday evening into Friday afternoon.

The storm dropped a half-foot or more of snow in Illinois on Wednesday, prompting hundreds of flight cancellations into and out of Chicago's O'Hare International Airport, according to the aviation tracking website FlightAware.com. More than 900 U.S. flights were canceled for Thursday, with O'Hare and Newark Liberty International



People enjoy a snow-covered Cloud Gate at Millennium Park in downtown Chicago, which became a great photo opportunity for visitors, Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014. As much as 9 inches of snow has fallen in some parts of the Chicago area since New Year's Eve, and a second wave is expected to dump several more inches by Thursday.

most affected.

Authorities said the weather may have been a factor in a fatal crash Wednesday evening involving a pickup and a bus carrying casino patrons in Indiana. Police said the truck's driver was killed and 15 bus passen-

gers were hurt in the collision on a snow-covered and slushy highway in Rolling Prairie.

Sections of interior southern New England and New York could get up to a foot of snow by the time the storm moves out, with forecasts generally calling

for 6 to 12 inches. New York City, likely to see 3 to 7 inches, issued a snow alert. New York Gov. Andrew Cuomo urged the city's commuters to leave their cars at home in case major highways are closed for Thursday's evening rush hour.

"We are looking at a serious storm situation," Cuomo said.

Although lesser amounts of snow were forecast to the south, Philadelphia and parts of southern New Jersey were expected to see 3 to 7 inches of blowing, drifting snow.

In Toms River, N.J., Jonas Caldwell said he was prepared for whatever the storm might bring.

"Santa brought me a snow blower, and I've got rock salt for the ice, so now I'm just waiting for the storm," he said while grabbing a coffee at a convenience store.

Caldwell, an investment adviser, said he could work from home if necessary, but he was hoping that wouldn't be the case.

"There are too many distractions at home," he said. "But I won't be stupid ... If it gets as bad as they say it will be, or looks like it will, I'll be staying put."

In Hartford, Hal Guy, of nearby Glastonbury, was shopping for snow shovels—three, to be exact.

"We broke a couple in the last storm," he said. "We have four kids, so, three shovels, and we still have a little one back home."

Guy said three of his kids, girls ages 8, 10 and 12, have been out of school for two weeks for the holidays and hope to get a couple more days off with the snow.

Over in Maine, where some communities are still recovering from a recent ice storm that cut power to more than 100,000 customers, people seemed prepared for more winter weather.

Kelly St. Denis, of Auburn, went skiing Wednesday at the Sunday River ski area with family and friends. She said it's been cold but the skiing has been good.

"Hey, it's winter in Maine," she said. "We go with it."

Marketing efforts to uninsured youth ramp up

MIAMI (AP)—The so-called "young invincibles" are so important to the success of the Affordable Care Act that supporters and detractors are spending millions to reach them with racy ads, social media campaigns and celebrity endorsements. The president is even (gasp) asking their mothers to help convince them to sign up for insurance.

The federal government and states running their own exchanges have launched marketing efforts for this crucial demographic of healthy young adults, but it's unclear if the messages are getting through.

Eric Fisher, a 28-year-old from Salt Lake City, said he still hasn't seen any of the social media campaigns—one of which targets Utah residents with images of people snowboarding and rock climbing.

He tried to sign up online when the federal marketplace first launched but couldn't because of the long wait times and other website glitches. He said he'll try again at some point. He added that the historic health care overhaul isn't a topic he and his friends spend much time talking about.

"It's not like a coffee table conversation," Fisher said.

According to a recent Harvard survey, many of Fisher's peers are undecided.

A poll by Harvard's Institute of Politics shows about 40 percent of people between the ages of 18 and 29 are on the fence about whether to sign up, with the rest split fairly evenly between those likely to enroll and those who probably won't.

The survey of 2,000 young adults was conducted from Oct. 30 to Nov. 11, after the first month of enrollment on the health care exchanges and when sign-up problems were at their peak.

Consisting of healthy college students and twentysomethings, the so-called "young invincible" demographic is the holy grail of the Affordable Care Act. Insurers need their participation to offset the costs of covering older, sicker Americans. If enough young people decide not to buy insurance through state or federal marketplaces, it could throw off the market's equilibrium and cause insurance rates to rise dramatically the following year.

ACROSS THE NATION

14 taken to hospitals after Minneapolis fire

MINNEAPOLIS (AP)—A billowing fire engulfed a three-story building with several apartments near downtown Minneapolis early Wednesday, sending more than a dozen people to hospitals with injuries—some critical—ranging from burns to trauma associated with falls. An explosion was reported about 8:15 a.m., and within minutes a fire raged through the building, said Robert Ball, a spokesman for Hennepin County Emergency Medical Services. Paramedics, amid sub-zero temperatures, responded to find victims on the ground, some with injuries that suggested they may have fallen multiple stories. No fatalities have been reported, but authorities weren't sure whether any residents were still inside the building.

2013 ends with a big drop in homicides in Chicago

CHICAGO (AP)—Following a year when Chicago led the nation in homicides with more than 500, the city's Police Department said Wednesday that in 2013 the city recorded the fewest killings since 1965 and

saw its overall crime rate fall to level not seen since 1972. The city, which ended the year with a 16 percent drop in crime, saw the numbers of violent crimes, including robbery, aggravated battery and criminal sexual assault drop significantly—some by double digits—as well as drops in burglary and motor vehicle theft. But it has been the city's homicide rate, especially the toll on young people, that has captured national attention.

Arizona father, 2 daughters found dead in home

TOLLESON, Ariz. (AP)—A father and his two young daughters have been found dead inside a home in the Phoenix suburb of Tolleson in what police are calling a murder-suicide. Police cordoned off an area in the neighborhood on Wednesday after getting a call from a relative who found the bodies. Tolleson Police Sgt. Obed Gaytan says the girls, ages 6 and 8, had been shot. Police identified the father as 45-year-old Alejandro Gallardo and said he died of a self-inflicted gunshot to the head. Neighbors and those who work in the area told police they heard screaming coming from the home Wednesday morning.

Barbara Bush remains hospitalized in Houston

HOUSTON (AP)—Former first lady Barbara Bush remains hospitalized with a respiratory-related issue, but her condition hasn't changed, a spokesman for her husband's office said Wednesday. Bush, 88, was admitted to Houston Methodist Hospital on Monday, though it wasn't announced until former President George H.W. Bush's office released a statement Tuesday night. "She is in great spirits, has already received visits from her husband and family, and is receiving fantastic care," the statement read, promising to provide updates as warranted. Jim McGrath, a spokesman for the former president, said there was "nothing new to report" on Wednesday.

NYC Mayor de Blasio takes formal oath at City Hall

NEW YORK (AP)—Democrat Bill de Blasio took the oath of office administered by former President Bill Clinton on Wednesday, formally becoming the city's 109th mayor while pledging to pursue a sweeping liberal agenda. "Big dreams are not a luxury reserved for a privileged few but the animating force behind every

community, in every borough," he said. The moment was the pinnacle of de Blasio's unlikely political rise as a symbol of restoration for the city's Democrats, who outnumber Republicans by a 6-1 ratio in one of the nation's most liberal cities yet haven't controlled City Hall since 1993.

Colorado shooting victim's dad forgives classmate

DENVER (AP)—The father of a 17-year-old girl who was fatally shot at her suburban Denver high school said Wednesday that he and his wife have forgiven the killer, and he asked others to do the same. Michael Davis said at a memorial service for his daughter Claire that the killer was blinded by anger and didn't know what he was doing. "My wife and I forgive Karl Pierson for what he did," Davis said. "We would ask all of you here and all of you watching to forgive Karl Pierson. He didn't know what he was doing." Sheriff's investigators say Pierson shot Claire Davis at Arapahoe County High School on Dec. 13. She died eight days later. Pierson, 18, who was also a student at Arapahoe High, killed himself after shooting Davis.

Asia

From feared Myanmar spymaster to art gallery owner

YANGON, Myanmar (AP)—Former political prisoner Than Htay walked into a small souvenir shop, hoping to catch a glimpse of the owner: a man once known in Myanmar as the Prince of Darkness.

Moments later, he was face to face with the bespectacled 74-year-old, who had long ago traded his military uniform and polished black shoes for a simple button-down shirt and flip-flops.

The man he sought had been among the country's most feared figures—a former junta leader whose intelligence apparatus jailed and tortured thousands of pro-democracy activists like Than Htay who stood against their rule. Now he runs a small art gallery that opened last year on the grounds of his sprawling residential compound, where he sells tourist crafts and dotes over his orchids.

The man, Khin Nyunt, smiled at his former captive. He was smaller than Than

Htay had imagined.

"I walked over to him and said, 'Hello, uncle. We used to be enemies,'" Than Htay said, recalling the moment several months ago he told the once all-powerful spymaster that he was among those jailed for dissent against the junta in the 1990s.

Khin Nyunt brushed aside that messy history and reached out to shake Than Htay's hand. "What you speak of, that is in the past," he said. "It's nice to meet you."

It was a meeting that showed that Myanmar has come a long way, but has a long way yet to go.

In 2011, this Southeast Asian country's former military rulers ceded power to a government led by retired generals who surprised the world by embarking on an era economic and political reform. But no one responsible for a half-century of rights abuses under army rule has been held accountable, and some are trying to bury the past by re-

making their images.

Khin Nyunt's transformation may be the most spectacular: He now portrays himself as a gentle humanitarian who spends quiet days meditating peacefully, cultivating flowers and fruit trees, and spending time with family and two huge guard dogs named Chit Chit and Chaw Chaw—"Lovely" and "Cutie."

"I'm not interested in politics anymore. That part of my life is over," he said in a recent interview as the soothing tones of a traditional Burmese bamboo xylophone filled his souvenir shop. "I'm now focused only on my family."

A protege of former dictator

Ne Win, Khin Nyunt ascended through the ranks of Myanmar's army to become one of the country's most powerful people. In 1988, he was a member of the junta that seized power after crushing a pro-democracy student movement. He eventually took over the country's intelligence apparatus, and spent years hunting down dissidents.

Among them was Than Htay, who was arrested in 1991 for funneling food and money to an anti-government militia. He spent five years in detention, where he said he was blindfolded, beaten with clubs, kicked and tortured with electric shocks.

Khin Nyunt became the junta's prime minister in 2003, but his career came to an abrupt end a year later amid a reported power struggle with junta chief Than Shwe. He was accused of corruption and placed him under house arrest, and hundreds of his followers were jailed or purged.

Khin Nyunt said he was confined to his home for seven years, cut off from friends and relatives without a phone. He said his savings ran so low he was forced to sell orchids to survive, with sympathetic security officers guarding him taking the flowers to a nearby market.

In January 2012, he was freed

in a general amnesty along with hundreds of political prisoners. But he said more than 20 of his associates are still detained.

The meetings he has had with former prisoners of conscience have been rare, and some have occurred by chance. He ran into Win Tin, an opposition party stalwart who spent 19 years in prison, during an awkward moment at a funeral.

Than Htay's visit came as part of a field trip to Khin Nyunt's art gallery with about 20 students from World Learning's Institute for Political and Civic Engagement, a nonprofit group that provides pro-democracy education to civil society activists.

Pakistan's Musharraf is no show in court; bomb found

ISLAMABAD (AP)—Former Pakistani president and army chief Pervez Musharraf failed to appear in court Wednesday for the second hearing in his high-profile treason case after authorities said they found an explosive device near his home.

His lawyers, citing the bomb scare, said it was too dangerous for Musharraf to appear in court. It was the third time since the high treason proceedings began that explosives have been found along the path the former strongman is supposed to take to court.

The security concerns and Musharraf's refusal to attend have stalled the landmark trial, a rare prosecution of a former top general in a country where the military's authority is rarely questioned.

It's the most serious of the legal troubles the 70-year-old Musharraf has faced since he returned to Pakistan in March. He came back hoping to run in elections but instead had been faced with a barrage of court cases connected to his rule and barred from being a candidate.

The case has also brought some grumbling from within the military's supporters, wary that one of their own is in court.

For their part, Musharraf's lawyers have contended that the judiciary trying him and the government bringing the case are biased against the former general. The current prime minister, Nawaz Sharif, was the man deposed by Musharraf in the 1999 coup and the recently retired chief justice was also detained by Musharraf in 2007.

The judge in Wednesday's hearing, Faysal Arab, was sympathetic to the defense's security concerns and adjourned the hearing until Thursday. But he pointed out the security arrangements and suggested he could issue an arrest warrant for Musharraf if he fails to appear Thursday.

Police officer Nayyar Saleem said officials scanning the route to court spotted the device on Wednesday along a road about two kilometers (a mile) from Musharraf's farmhouse on Islamabad's outskirts.

One of Musharraf's lawyers, Ahmed Qasuri, told the three-member panel of judges hearing the case that there were "many security issues" preventing the former leader's appearance and that the court would be responsible if anything went wrong.

Islamabad police officials said 1,000 security personnel were deployed to protect Musharraf but said they could not guarantee a bomb-proof vehicle for the former general to ride in.

Musharraf's lawyers have also argued that the special court hearing his case was not properly formed, that the individual judges are biased and that the case against him is a vendetta by the prime minister and the recently retired chief justice.

At one point during the sometimes testy proceedings, Qasuri pointed his finger at the prosecutor, Akram Sheikh, and said: "He's not a prosecutor. He's a persecutor!"

Musharraf took power in a 1999 coup and ruled Pakistan for nearly a decade.



In this Oct. 20, 2013 photo, Khin Nyunt, a former junta leader once known in Myanmar as the Prince of Darkness, poses in his art gallery in Yangon, Myanmar. AP

6 killed, 15 wounded in Philippine bomb attacks

MANILA, Philippines (AP)—At least six people have been killed and 15 others wounded in separate bomb attacks in the Philippines' southern region, the military and police said.

A homemade bomb exploded at a kiosk in Basilan province's Sumisip township, killing six people and wounding 10 others during a New Year's

party late Tuesday, said armed forces spokesman Lt. Col. Ramon Zagala.

Zagala said the explosion was unrelated to the raucous revelry common in the country when Filipinos set off firecrackers and fire weapons to greet the New Year.

"This is really an improvised explosive device," he said, adding the motive was

still unknown.

Hours earlier in Cotabato province's Carmen township, a motorcycle-riding assailant hurled a grenade outside a Protestant church wounding a mother, her three children and another girl, police said. Police said three men on two motorcycles were seen speeding away.

Capt. Antonio Bulao, a local

army spokesman, said the assailants may have planned to attack a local police outpost but decided to throw the grenade at a weaker target.

Islamist militants and Muslim rebels are known to operate in the two southern provinces, but Zagala said it could not immediately be determined if they were involved.

China's 1st aircraft carrier ends sea trials

BEIJING (AP)—China's first aircraft carrier has successfully completed sea trials in the South China Sea, state media reported.

The Liaoning returned to port Wednesday after a 37-day voyage, the official Xinhua News Agency said.

Citing an unnamed naval source, Xinhua said the aircraft carrier tested its combat sys-

tem and conducted a formation practice and "attained the anticipated objectives."

"All tests and training programs went well as scheduled," it said.

Aircraft, naval vessels and submarines also participated in the Liaoning's tests.

Early in the Liaoning's trial run one of the Chinese ships accompanying it was

involved in a near collision with a U.S. Navy ship, which a Chinese media report said was down to the U.S. ship getting too close to the Liaoning. It marked the two countries' most serious sea confrontation in years.

The U.S. Pacific Fleet said the USS Cowpens had to maneuver to avoid a collision on Dec. 5.

The Chinese defense ministry later confirmed the incident but gave few details. It said a Chinese naval ship conducting normal patrols had encountered a U.S. military vessel and handled the situation according to operating procedures.

The Liaoning was bought from Ukraine more than a decade ago and extensively refurbished before entering service last year.

World

Palestinian ambassador in Prague killed in blast

PRAGUE (AP)—The Palestinian ambassador to the Czech Republic died Wednesday in an explosion that occurred when he opened an old safe that had been left untouched for more than 20 years, officials said.

Ambassador Jamal al-Jamal, 56, was at home with his family at the time of the explosion, according to Palestinian Embassy spokesman Nabil El-Fahel. Al-Jamal was seriously injured and rushed to a hospital where he died, according to police spokeswoman Andrea Zoulova.

Palestinian Foreign Minister Riad Malki said no foul play was suspected, noting that the safe had been left untouched for more than 20 years.

It also appeared that the door of the safe had been booby-trapped, according to Zoulova. It was unclear how al-Jamal tried to open it or what type of safe it was.

The safe was recently moved from the old embassy building, but it had come from a building that used to house the Palestinian Liberation Organization's offices in the 1980s, Malki said.

"The ambassador decided to open it. After he opened it, apparently something happened inside (the safe) and went off," Malki told The Associated Press.

It was not immediately clear how Malki knew the safe had been untouched for more than 20 years or why and when the safe would have been booby-trapped.



An al-Qaida fighter stands guard after setting fire to an Iraqi police truck in front of the provincial government headquarters in Fallujah, 40 miles (65 kilometers) west of Baghdad, Iraq, Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2014.

UN: Iraq sees highest annual death toll in years

BAGHDAD (AP)—The United Nations said Wednesday that violence claimed the lives of 7,818 civilians in Iraq in 2013, the highest annual death toll in years.

Over eight months of esca-

lated violence has sparked fears that the country may be returning to the widespread bloodshed of 2004-2007 that saw tens of thousands killed each year. Death tolls dipped following a U.S. troop surge and an alliance

of Sunni militias with U.S. forces against al-Qaida, but soaring sectarian distrust appears to be allowing the extremist network to rebuild.

Violence spiked in April after the Shiite-led government

staged a deadly crackdown on a Sunni protest camp. Iraq's al-Qaida branch has fed on Sunni discontent and on the civil war in neighboring Syria, in which mostly Sunni rebels fight a government whose base is a Shiite

offshoot sect. It has targeted civilians, particularly in Shiite areas of Baghdad, with waves of co-ordinated car bombings and other deadly attacks.

The U.N. figures gave a total of 759 people killed in December alone, including 661 civilians and 98 members of the security forces. Another 1,345 were wounded, the statement said. The U.N.'s monthly figures for both civilians and security forces over the year totaled 8,868.

Mission chief Nickolay Mladenov called on Iraqis to take the necessary steps to stem violence. "This is a sad and terrible record which confirms once again the urgent need for the Iraqi authorities to address the roots of violence to curb this infernal circle," Mladenov was quoted in the statement as saying.

The insurgency appears to have capitalized on a protest movement by Sunnis angered at what they consider second-class treatment, and the government's crackdown on it.

On Wednesday, al-Qaida gunmen fanned out in the streets of towns in the volatile western province of Anbar amid Sunni anger over the arrest of a prominent Sunni lawmaker and the dismantlement of a year-long sit-in in the provincial capital Ramadi in recent days.

Rescue delayed for icebound ship in Antarctica

CANBERRA, Australia (AP)—The latest attempt to rescue passengers on board a research ship that has been trapped in Antarctic ice for more than a week was delayed again Thursday after sea ice prevented a barge from reaching one of the rescue vessels.

The Australian Maritime Safety Authority's Rescue Coordination Centre, which is handling the operation, said earlier on Thursday that weather conditions had improved and rescue flights were expected to commence. A helicopter was expected to airlift passengers to a Chinese icebreaker, the Snow Dragon, and a barge would then ferry them to a nearby Australian vessel.

But before the rescue operation could begin, sea ice had blocked the path of the barge that needed to make it from the Australian vessel, the Aurora Australis, to the Snow Dragon. Because the Aurora isn't built to handle a helicopter landing, it appeared unlikely that the passengers would be rescued Thursday, the maritime authority said.

"This rescue is a complex operation involving a number of steps. Operations in Antarctica are all weather and ice dependent and conditions can change rapidly," the agency said in a statement.

Stuck in the ice

The MV Akademik Shokalskiy sailed from New Zealand to Antarctica with 74 scientists, crew and passengers aboard. Blizzard winds drove sea ice around the ship Dec. 24, and now it's tightly stuck. Looking at the situation:

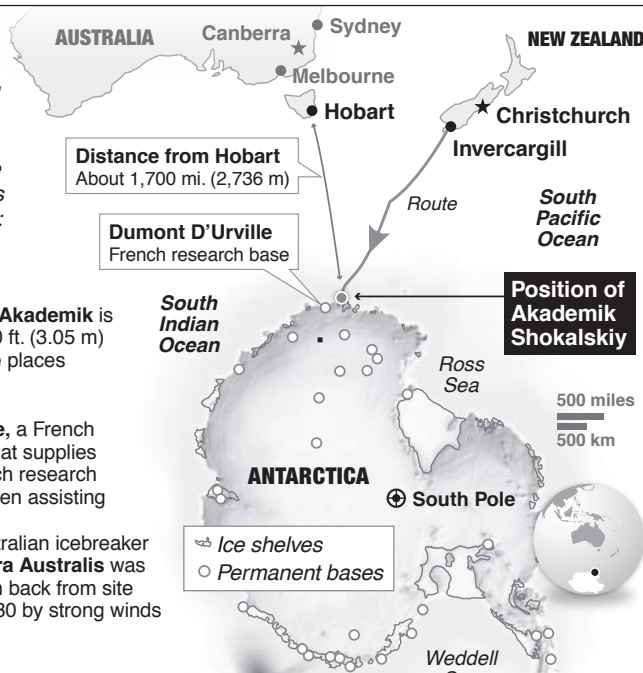
Icebreakers trying to help

- Ice around Akademik is reportedly 10 ft. (3.05 m) thick in some places
- L'Astrolabe, a French icebreaker that supplies nearby French research base, has been assisting
- Australian icebreaker Aurora Australis was driven back from site Dec. 30 by strong winds



Akademik Shokalskiy

- 233 ft. (71 m) long
- Diesel engines
- Built in Russia
- The ship's complement were studying the route of expedition by Australian explorer Douglas Mawson from 1911 to 1914
- Xue Long came within 7 mi. (11 km), but the ice thickness kept it from reaching them



- Chinese icebreaker Xue Long, or Snow Dragon, will use its helicopter to rescue the 52 passengers aboard Akademik, in several trips
- Flights will have to wait until Jan. 1, when it is thought the weather will improve
- Ship is rated to handle ice, but not as thick as the pack ice it's stuck in

Source: AP, Reuters, The Age, Maritime News, University of New South Wales

Graphic: Robert Dorrell

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Hospital: Sharon's health worsens

JERUSALEM (AP)—The medical condition of the comatose former Israeli Prime Minister Ariel Sharon sharply deteriorated Wednesday, the hospital treating him said.

Sharon, 85, has been in a coma since 2006 when a devastating stroke incapacitated him at the height of his political power. His family has said that he sometimes opens his eyes and moves his fingers.

Amir Marom, a spokesman for Tel Hashomer hospital, where Sharon has been treated for most of the past eight years, said Wednesday that Sharon's medical condition has "deteriorated in the past few days." He refused to elaborate. Contacted by The Associated Press, Sharon's son, Omri, refused to comment.

Israeli media reported that Sharon was suffering from kidney problems and that his family was at the hospital. In September, Sharon underwent surgery to insert a new feeding tube.

Sharon was one of Israel's most iconic and controversial figures. As one of Israel's most famous generals, Sharon was known for bold tactics and an occasional refusal to obey orders.

The rescue operation for the 74 scientists, tourists and crew on the Russian ship MV Akademik Shokalskiy has been plagued by one delay after another since the vessel became stuck on Christmas Eve. Three icebreakers were initially dispatched to try and crack their way through the thick ice surrounding the ship, but all failed. The Aurora came within 20 kilometers (12 miles) of the ship Monday, but fierce winds and snow forced it to retreat to open water.

Officials had been planning on Thursday to use a helicopter on board the Snow Dragon—which is waiting at the edge of the ice pack with the Aurora—to rescue 52 scientists and tourists, a dozen at a time, over five hours. All 22 crew members are expected to stay with their icebound vessel, which is not in danger.

The passengers were then supposed to be flown 11 kilometers (7 miles) to the Chinese ship, from where they would be transported 4 kilometers (2 miles) by barge to the Australian icebreaker. They were then expected to travel to the Australian island state of Tasmania, arriving by mid-January.

Earlier Thursday, it appeared likely the rescue would go ahead, with expedition leader Chris Turney posting a video on his Twitter account, blue sky visible behind him.

Off The Wall

Gambler rewards man who returned \$300K left in cab

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A poker player who left \$300,000 in the back seat of a Las Vegas taxi made good on his promise this week, handing over a \$10,000 reward to the honest

cabbie who returned the stash.

Yellow Checker Star Cab Company CEO Bill Shranko confirmed Friday that Gerardo Gamboa had been paid by the poker player. The cab com-

pany also honored the driver's good deed by naming him employee of the year, awarding him \$1,000 and giving him a gift certificate to a Las Vegas steakhouse.

It's unclear how Gamboa plans to spend the belated Christmas gift. He did not immediately return a call from The Associated Press on Friday.

The tale, first reported by the Las Vegas Review-Journal,

started Monday when Gamboa made a pickup at the Bellagio casino. A hotel doorman noticed a brown paper bag on the back seat and handed it to him; Gamboa thought it was candy.

The driver said he had another passenger by the time he began wondering what kind of chocolates were in the brown paper bag. He peeked inside at a traffic light and spotted the cash.

"I told my passenger, 'You

are my witness on this,'" the 13-year taxi driver told the Las Vegas Sun, "and then I immediately called my dispatcher."

Gamboa took the six bundles of \$100 bills to the company's main office, where Las Vegas police and casino officials linked it to the poker player.

It took several hours to verify the identity of the owner and return the cash. Authori-

ties aren't identifying the poker player.

Before he learned about the anonymous gambler's gift, Gamboa said he wasn't in it for the money.

"If he doesn't give me anything, that's OK," Gamboa told the Sun earlier this week. "I'm not waiting for any kind of return. I just wanted to do the right thing, and I appreciate what the company did for me."

Hawaii woman with long last name gets new ID cards

HONOLULU (AP)—A Hawaii woman whose last name is 36 characters long has finally gotten the whole thing to fit on her driver's license and state identification card.

Janice "Lokelani" Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale (KAY'-ee-hah-nah-EE'-coo-COW'-ah-KAH'-hee-HOO'-lee-heh-eh-KAH'-how-NAH-eh-leh) has a surname that consists of 35 letters plus an okina, a mark used in the Hawaiian alphabet. She received her new license and ID after her campaign to get her full name on the cards prompted the state Department of Transportation to change its policy to expand the number of characters that can appear.

Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale, 54, said Monday that she's happy she was able to help fix the problem of identification cards lacking sufficient space for long names.

"Now, in the state of Hawaii, we are no longer second class citizens because of the length of our name," she said.

Hawaii driver's licenses and ID cards previously had room for names totaling up to 35 characters. The new policy allows 40 characters for last names, 40

for first names and 35 for middle names.

Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale got the name when she married her Hawaiian husband in 1992.

He used only the one name, which his grandfather gave him after it came to him in a dream.

Under the old policy, Hawaii County issued Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale her driver's license and state ID with the last letter of her name chopped off. And it omitted her first name.

She told news media about the issue earlier this year after a policeman gave her a hard time about her driver's license during a traffic stop.

Last month, the state Department of Transportation announced it expanded the character limits.

Keihanaikukauakahihuliheekahaunaale is now hoping to get the Social Security Administration to allow more characters on its identification cards.

The agency's cards have two lines for names. The first line has 26 spaces for first and middle names while the second line has 26 spaces for a last name and suffix.

Pa. man lands 'corrected' 1918 stamps

BUFFALO, N.Y. (AP)—A collector credits a hunch with helping him land one of just 100 sheets of stamps recently issued by the United States Postal Service featuring a corrected version of its rare and famous error, the 1918 "inverted Jenny."

Art Van Riper bought the stamps in Waverly, N.Y., after reading that the Postal Service had printed a new batch of inverted Jenny stamps celebrating the 95-year-old edition that, by mistake, featured an upside-down biplane.

He also read that, as a way to draw more people into stamp collecting, the Postal Service randomly distributed 100 sheets featuring the plane right-side up among the 2.2 million sheets replicating the

original and distributed nationwide.

"I needed some stamps and thought 'what the heck,'" Van Riper said by phone earlier this month from his Sayre, Pa., home, on the New York border. "I just had a feeling that maybe there would be one in Waverly."

He intended to purchase five sheets of the \$2 stamps, at \$12 a sheet, and use them to mail Christmas presents and for stocking stuffers. Postal clerk Betty Gable persuaded him to take more.

"I told him our office had 45 and he might as well buy them all," she said. The last one would probably be the one with the right-side up airplane, she told him.

"I'll be a son-of-a-gun it



In this combination of two 2013 photos released by the United States Postal Service, a reissue of two versions of the famous "Inverted Jenny" postage stamp is shown.

was," said Van Riper, who has a jewelry store and said he collects oddities ranging from baseball cards to old steins.

Van Riper's was the fourth of the 100 sheets to turn up since the post office launched the campaign in September, USPS spokesman Mark Saunders said. One of the four is listed at \$25,000 online, Van Riper said, but he doesn't have plans to sell his sheet.

Among stamp collectors, the inverted Jenny, produced by a printing error, is gold. Only one sheet of 100 stamps commemorating the nation's first airmail flight was sold. One of the stamps recently sold for \$977,000, according to the Postal Service.

OFFBEAT BRIEFS

New Year's jam: Pa. strawberry busted in test drop

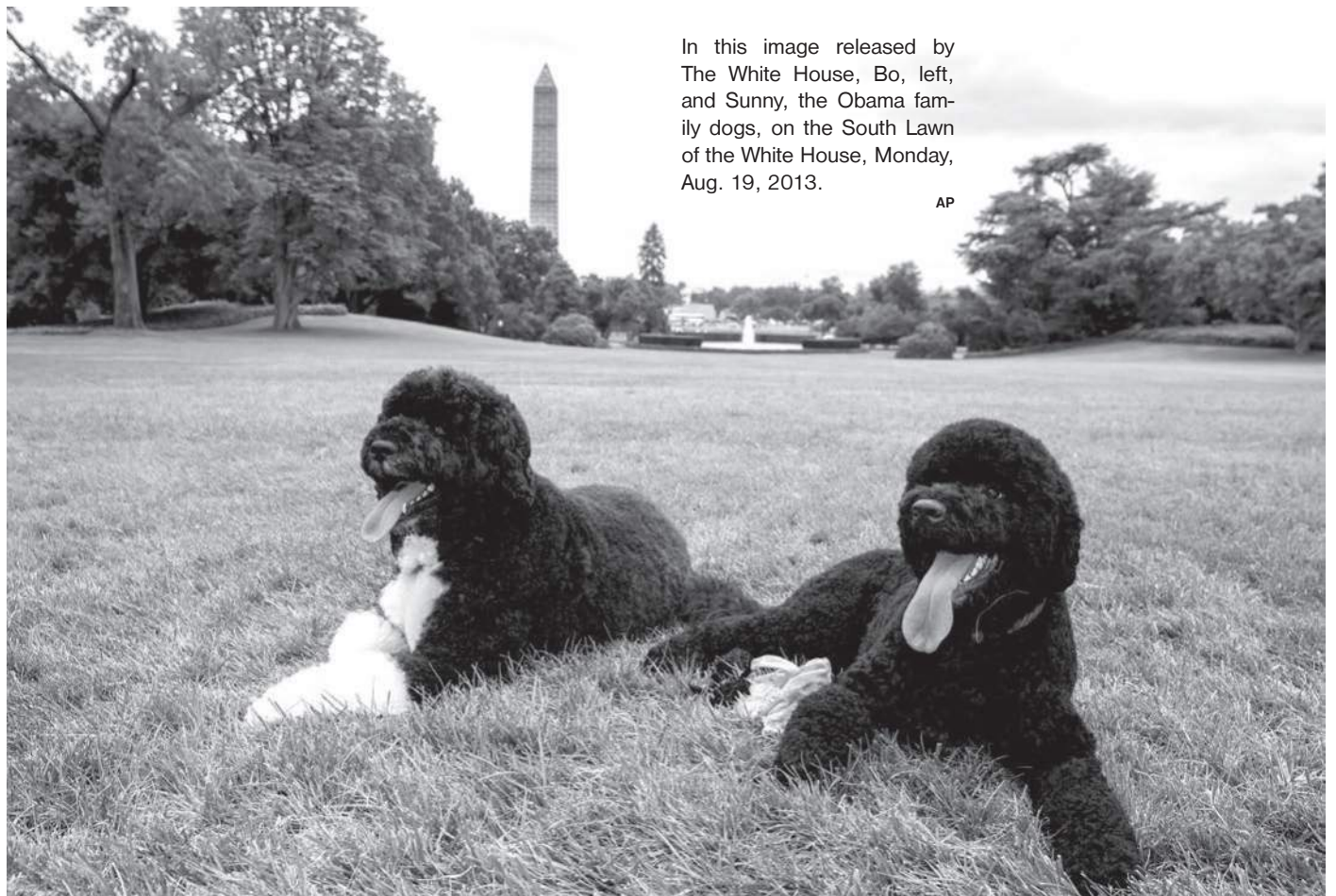
HARRISBURG, Pa. (AP)—An 80-pound illuminated strawberry that's lowered every New Year's Eve in downtown Harrisburg has ended up in a messy jam. The berry fell three stories and smashed during a practice run at the Hilton Harrisburg on Friday. Officials say a faulty harness clip is to blame. The Hilton is working to build a new strawberry for revelers to ring in 2014 on Tuesday night. The strawberry drop started in 1989. The berry that broke Friday had been used for around 10 years.

Thief carries 250-pound safe out of Mass. Eatery

WEYMOUTH, Mass. (AP)—Massachusetts police are searching for a strong-armed thief who carried a 250-pound safe out of a restaurant. Kevin Hynes says a man walked out of his Stockholders Restaurant in Weymouth on Sunday night lugging the vault. Surveillance tape shows the man entering a side door at the rear of the restaurant, heading down the stairs and coming back up carrying a large object wrapped in a trash bag. No arrests have been made. Hynes isn't saying how much money was in the safe, but he's offering a \$2,500 reward for information leading to the man's arrest. He says he's since bought an even heavier safe and bolted it to the concrete floor.

6 arrested in Calif. police impersonation prank

TEMECULA, Calif. (AP)—Authorities say they arrested six teens accused of posing as Southern California police officers and ordering people out of their cars by using megaphones and high-powered flashlights to obscure their real identity. The teens ordered the victims to lie face down on the pavement and then drove away. The Riverside County Sheriff's Department says 18-year-old Mason Gonzalez of Temecula has been arrested as well as three girls and two boys. Authorities said they first received reports of the alleged pranks on Dec. 23. There were no attempts to harm or rob the victims during the incidents.



In this image released by The White House, Bo, left, and Sunny, the Obama family dogs, on the South Lawn of the White House, Monday, Aug. 19, 2013.

Even Obama dogs jump through hoops to enter Hawaii

HONOLULU (AP)—It doesn't matter that they belong to President Barack Obama—first family dogs Bo and Sunny had to go through Hawaii's strict quarantine procedures to travel to the islands for their holiday vacation.

Hawaii is rabies free and all incoming dogs have to jump through several hoops, including an expensive rabies blood test. Dogs that don't meet regulations can be quarantined up to 120 days.

Program Manager Isaac Maeda of Hawaii's Rabies Quarantine Branch said Monday that the Obamas complied with all requirements asked of other pet owners.

The only difference: Maeda

says a military veterinarian inspected the dogs and their paperwork on arrival at Hickam Air Force Base early Dec. 21. Other pet owners usually go through a quarantine office at Honolulu International Airport.

Life & Style

125th Rose Parade hosts its first same-sex wedding

PASADENA, Calif. (AP)—Standing atop a giant wedding cake float, Aubrey Loots and Danny Leclair exchanged vows New Year's Day in the first same-sex marriage during the Tournament of Roses Parade.

Throng of spectators cheered as the men, dressed in dark suits, faced each other and held hands before the Rev. Alfreda Lanoix, who officiated the ceremony aboard the AIDS Healthcare Foundation float.

Days earlier, a San Diego woman launched a Facebook page urging people to boycott the 125th Rose Parade after learning of the couple's plans. But some like Jennifer Adair, who cheered along with her girlfriend, lined the streets just for this moment.

"We're a modern-day society, so accept it. Don't worry about what other people do," Adair told the Los Angeles Times.

The Pasadena Tournament of Roses, which puts on the parade, had said the float represents this year's parade theme, "Dreams Come True."

Kevin Ferguson, who watched the couple pass by, said he supported their move despite opposition by some.

"You can't put a timetable on another person's freedom," Ferguson told the Times.

Loots and Leclair, who met across a crowded dance floor 12 years ago, own a small chain of hair salons. Their wedding came toward the end of the two-hour parade festivities.

Los Angeles Dodgers long-time broadcaster Vin Scully, the parade's grand marshal, kicked off the show after six F-16s from the Air Force's Thunderbirds roared overhead.

"Instead of me throwing out the first pitch, let's start the parade," said Scully, who will toss the kickoff coin at the Rose Bowl match between Stanford and Michigan State.

One by one, flowered floats, exotic equestrians and brass bands marched along the 5 1/2-mile route.

A heavy police presence ringed this year's revelry in the aftermath of the Boston Marathon bombings. More than 1,100 officers patrolled the crowd. Bomb-sniffing dogs and a wide range of video surveillance also were used to detect suspicious behavior.

At the start of the parade route, police arrested 19 animal rights activists who tried to stop the SeaWorld float featuring orcas. The demonstrators were booked on suspicion of interfering with a special event, Pasadena police Lt. Terysa Rojas said.

The parade went on as scheduled with officers and sheriff's deputies guarding the SeaWorld float as it passed by onlookers.

Overnight, 17 people were arrested along the parade route on suspicion of various offenses including public intoxication, vandalism and battery.

Despite the arrests, Rojas said parade-goers were mostly well-behaved.



This 2013 photo released by A&E Network shows, from left, Jase Robertson, Missy Robertson, Willie Robertson and Korie Robertson, in the episode "Let's Go Hunting, Deer," from the A&E Networks show, "Duck Dynasty."

'Duck' son Robertson makes nice in Fox interview

NEW YORK (AP)—"Duck Dynasty" star Willie Robertson chose not to quack back.

In one of his first chances to comment on the dust-up surrounding his outspoken father and co-star Phil Robertson, the younger Robertson had only kind words for the A&E network and New Year's wishes for the nation in an appearance Tuesday night on Fox News's "All-American New Year" special.

"We're just glad to be back

to work, and A&E and us are fine," Willie Robertson said in a live appearance with wife Korie from Steamboat Springs, Colo.

Fox hosts Bill Hemmer and Elizabeth Hasselbeck gave him several chances to address the firestorm surrounding the suspension of his father over anti-gay comments, but without quite ducking the question, Willie Robertson chose not to take the bait either.

"We're looking forward to

getting back to making some funny shows. It's a New Year so we're ready to break in a New Year and start it all over again," Robertson said. "We're ready to move on, you know. I think we all learned a lot and we're just ready to move on, and the family's happy, and we're ready to go. I've got to make sure my guys are back there building duck calls."

Asked her thoughts on the suspension by Hasselbeck, Korie Robertson took the

same conciliatory tone.

"Hey, I'm just glad the family's all together, the best thing about the show is we get to do it as a family," she said. "We're all happy, happy, happy."

The cable channel reinstated Phil Robertson on Friday, nine days after suspending him over the anti-gay comments made to GQ magazine.

The suspension sparked brought out legions of defenders who felt he was being censored by the network.

More cars and coffee on Seinfeld's Web talk show

NEW YORK (AP)—Jerry Seinfeld loves cars. He's fond of coffee. And, of course, he's a comedian who loves to talk comedy.

But the inspiration for his on-line talk show, "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee" (wherein he and a fellow comedian crack wise while powered by a car and caffeine), was inspired by an episode of his eponymous 1990s sitcom.

In that memorable episode, Jerry's sad-sack pal, George, decided success might await him if he lived his failed life in the opposite manner.

"That," recalls Seinfeld in a recent interview, "gave me the idea to create a talk show that was the opposite of the typical show."

"With a typical talk show," he explains, "you have to go to a studio. You have to tell them in advance what you're going to talk about. You have to dress up. You have to put on makeup. It's very, very organized."

"I thought, maybe there's a different way than being stuck



This image released by Crackle shows comedians Louis C.K., left, and Jerry Seinfeld in a scene from Seinfeld's new web series talk show "Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee."

on a couch: Outside and moving is the opposite of inside and still.

"That," he sums up, "is where it began."

"Comedians in Cars Getting Coffee" launched on the Crackle digital network in 2012, and its third season hits the road Thursday with Seinfeld joining Louis C.K. for a cup of joe after

a zany ride on a clown-car-scale 1959 Fiat Jolly.

"I pick you up at your house and we literally go out for a cup of coffee." Future ride-alongs include Patton Oswalt, Howard Stern, Tina Fey, Todd Barry and Jay Leno.

"I wanted to make a show that people would like to be on,

instead of groaning and going, 'Yeah, all right, I'll do it,'" says Seinfeld in his office in Manhattan's famed Brill Building, where soon he will begin another editing session to whittle the Leno episode to a tight 18 or 20 minutes from the two or three hours of recorded chitchat.

Each show is meticulously

crafted. But that's no surprise, considering how, at age 59 with nothing left to prove, Seinfeld continues to revise and refine his stand-up act. Here, too, Seinfeld is a stickler for detail, as when he huddles with an editor a few minutes later to tweak the music accompanying a shot of the car (a 1949 Porsche 356/2) he and Leno will share.

"Do you feel like that music is a little bit of a rough transition?" he muses. "It's a little abrupt. But you know the second phrase of that track is a little more gentle. Maybe we could start there, you know what I mean?"

Even so, the flavor of each episode is insistently no-frills, candid and off-the-cuff.

Seinfeld says he never prepares for a taping.

"Things just occur to me. Like asking Howard Stern to tell me how his life ends, what he's doing in that last moment. It just occurred to me as we were driving. He seemed like a guy who's really afraid of death. So I wanted to ask him about it."

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WALKING WITH DINOSAURS [CC,DV] (PG)
(1205 PM 230 PM 500 PM)

ANCHORMAN 2 [CC,DV] (PG)
710 PM 1000 PM

HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG [CC,DV] (NR)
(315 PM) 1020 PM

HOBBIT: THE DESOLATION OF SMAUG 3D [CC,DV] (NR)
700 PM

FROZEN [CC,DV] (PG)
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Times For 01/03 www.REGmovies.com

'Saturday Night Live' comes to China's Internet

BEIJING (AP)—A popular online video site has brought American irreverent comedy sketch show "Saturday Night Live" to China.

Sohu Video announced Thursday that it will exclusively put the show that regularly mocks the

Vegas officer retires after Guns N' Roses inquiry

LAS VEGAS (AP)—A Las Vegas police captain who helped a rock star pull off an elaborate wedding proposal by arranging a flight on a department helicopter has retired rather than face demotion, and the pilot's flying wings have been clipped, the agency confirmed.

Capt. David O'Leary faced demotion to lieutenant for helping arrange the Aug. 7 private flight for Guns N' Roses guitarist Daren Jay "DJ" Ashba and his then-girlfriend, Colombian actress Nathalia Henao, the police department said in a statement issued late Tuesday.

O'Leary, a 25-year veteran who oversaw the Financial Crimes Bureau, instead retired on Dec. 20.

Officer Ray Horsley, who piloted the helicopter, is being transferred out of the Air Support Detail as of Jan. 11 and will no longer be allowed to fly for the department, police officials said.

The discipline follows a four-month investigation launched after word of the private, unauthorized aerial tour of Sin City came from Ashba himself.

Ashba posted a photo on Instagram of himself and Henao wearing helicopter headgear and thanked the Las Vegas police department for "the most amazing" private helicopter tour over the city.

He said it ended in a field at police headquarters where he proposed amid roses and "a bottle of the bubble stuff."

In the post, Ashba called the moment "magical," adding, "And thanks to our good friends for helping making it all happen!"

The couple married in September.

Police officials concluded O'Leary and Horsley violated department policy.

"A fly along and a patrol ride along are typically done for the purpose of exposing members of the community to the duties of law enforcement," the department's statement said. "A fly along would begin and terminate at Air Support and would not include any off site landings as occurred in this case."

The statement added that the "civilians" directly involved in the flight declined to be interviewed as part of the internal investigation.

U.S. government, popular culture and others on its website.

Sohu says it will be available online in its original version without subtitles the Monday after the latest episode is shown in the U.S. A

MSNBC host apologizes for jokes about Romney baby

NEW YORK (AP)—An MSNBC host apologized to Mitt Romney's family Tuesday after she and guests on her show joked about a Christmas picture that showed the 2012 Republican presidential candidate's adopted, African-American grandson.

Melissa Harris-Perry said her intention was to celebrate diversity, but the segment took an unexpected and offensive turn when she asked her guests to talk about a photo showing infant Kieran Romney with his grandparents and their 21 other grandchildren,

all of them white.

One guest on her Sunday show, actress Pia Glenn, sang "one of these things just isn't the same."

Comedian Dean Obeidallah said it "sums up the diversity of the Republican party."

Harris-Perry said she'd like to see Kieran marry Kanye West's daughter so West and Romney would be in-laws.

MSNBC has had several of its hosts issue apologies in recent months.

Martin Bashir apologized and

conference with then Chinese President Hu Jintao berating President Barack Obama over the national debt.

But Sohu CEO Charles Zhang said he didn't expect the show to be controversial in China.

resigned from the network on Dec. 4 after making graphic remarks about former Alaska Gov. Sarah Palin, suggesting someone should defecate in her mouth.

Bashir's comments about Palin came on the same day MSNBC suspended Alec Baldwin from his weekly show for two episodes because the actor used an anti-gay slur in a confrontation with a photographer on a New York City street. Baldwin apologized, and he and network ended his show after five episodes.

'Big Bang Theory' star Kaley Cuoco gets married



This Dec. 5, 2012 file photo shows actress Kaley Cuoco at the Raising the Bar to End Parkinsons fundraising event at Public School 310 in Culver City, Calif.

SANTA SUSANA, Calif. (AP)—"The Big Bang Theory" star Kaley Cuoco (KAY-lee KWOH-koh) is starting off 2014 as a Mrs.

Cuoco's representative, Melissa Kates, says the actress wed tennis pro Ryan Sweeting in a

New Year's Eve ceremony at a ranch in Santa Susana, Calif.

Afterward, the 28-year-old Cuoco posted a few photos with her 26-year-old husband on her Instagram account. She wore a pink Vera Wang wedding gown and captioned one picture as

"Greatest night of my entire life."

The couple dated for three months before getting engaged in September.

Cuoco previously dated her "Big Bang" co-star Johnny Galecki.

'Murder, She Wrote' star Angela Lansbury honored

LONDON (AP)—Honor, She Got.

Hollywood star Angela Lansbury, best known as the clue-collecting supersleuth in the television series "Murder, She Wrote," has been made a Dame of the British Empire.

The 88-year-old actress was one of more than 1,000 people who were recognized by Queen Elizabeth II in the New Year's Honors List. For the first time since the Order of the British Empire was founded in 1917, most of them were women.

Actress Penelope Keith, known to Brits as the snobbish



In this Jan. 7, 2013 file photo, actress Angela Lansbury poses for photos in Sydney, Australia.

Margot Leadbetter in the 1970s sitcom "The Good Life," was also made a dame.

Dr. Marcus Setchell, the queen's gynecologist, who oversaw the safe delivery of her

great-grandson Prince George, was made a knight.

The twice-yearly royal honors reward hundreds of people for services to their community or national life.

Tight lips can keep tongues from wagging in the office

By **ABIGAIL VAN BUREN**
UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE



DEAR ABBY: I am a 27-year-old mom who has always been overweight. I have tried all sorts of diets and programs, and have lost a few pounds and then gained it all back and more.

My boss has offered to pay for me to have weight loss surgery. It is something I have always wanted, but could never afford. My boss told me she knows the struggle I have had and the frustration I have experienced.

My family is behind me and supports my decision to have it done. My concern is that once others in my office learn it was paid for by the boss, I'll be treated differently. I'm concerned about possible catty comments. They are gossips, and I hate being the center of attention in situations like that. The truth is bound to come out, so how can I comment on the gift I've been given?

SO GRATEFUL IN TEXAS

DEAR SO GRATEFUL: You have a generous and empathetic boss who obviously cares about you. Unless one of you reveals that she paid for your surgery, "the truth" is NOT bound to come out. How your operation is paid for is nobody's business.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: My father recently told me his girlfriend is pregnant with twins. She is in her 40s and he is in his 50s. She already has two kids who are quite a handful. They both have low-paying jobs and I don't think they can handle two more children.

My father now is asking me to move in with him to help out. Because of their financial state and their ages, I'm afraid this is a huge risk. If I tell him what my concerns are, I am sure he'll think I'm heartless and stop talking to me. I don't know what to do. Dad might not even be around to see those kids graduate from high school. What can I do?

TROUBLED SON IN COLORADO

DEAR TROUBLED SON: Unless you're willing to give up your freedom I don't recommend doing what your father is proposing. He should not expect you to assume child care or financial responsibility because his birth control method failed. That privilege rightfully belongs to him and his girlfriend. Tell your father you sympathize with his dilemma, but the answer is no.

■■■

DEAR ABBY: I read your column on the nights that I work, and I was wondering if you have had days when you just wanted to tell someone who has written to you to "suck it up and deal with it." I am generally a nice person and would help the most helpless cases as best I could, but I know that I have days when I have been snarky. I was wondering how you deal with those days.

FEELING SNARKY TONIGHT IN VERMONT

DEAR FEELING SNARKY: I write my column from an office away from my home. Because of that, it's easier to leave distractions (or "problems") on the other side of the door when I enter. I'm here to help people, not to make anyone feel worse. If for some reason I felt I was unable to do that, I would either go for a long walk or postpone writing for another day.

■■■

Dear Abby is written by Abigail Van Buren, also known as Jeanne Phillips, and was founded by her mother, Pauline Phillips. Write Dear Abby at www.DearAbby.com or P.O. Box 69440, Los Angeles, CA 90069.

■■■

To receive a collection of Abby's most memorable—and most frequently requested—poems and essays, send your name and mailing address, plus check or money order for \$7 (U.S. funds) to: Dear Abby—Keepers Booklet, P.O. Box 447, Mount Morris, IL 61054-0447. Shipping and handling are included in the price.

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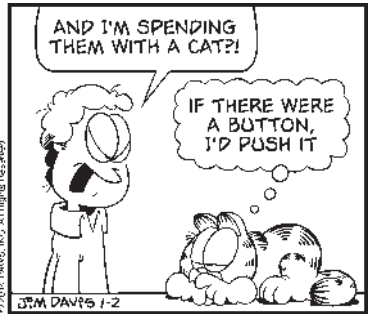
Pastimes

Calvin and Hobbes

By Bill Waterson

Garfield®

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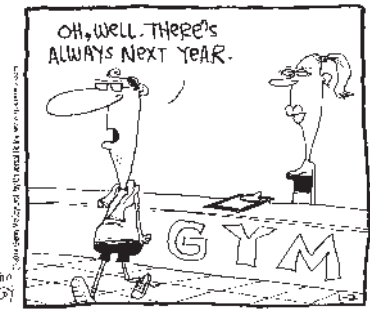
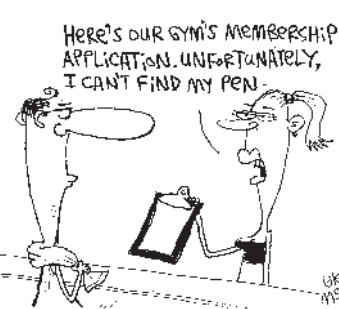
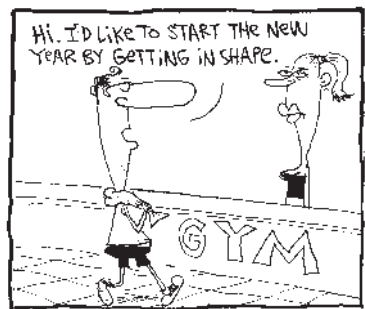


Adam@home

By Bryan Basset

The Duplex

By Glenn McCoy

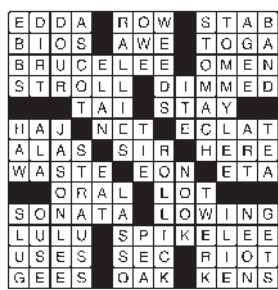


CROSSWORD

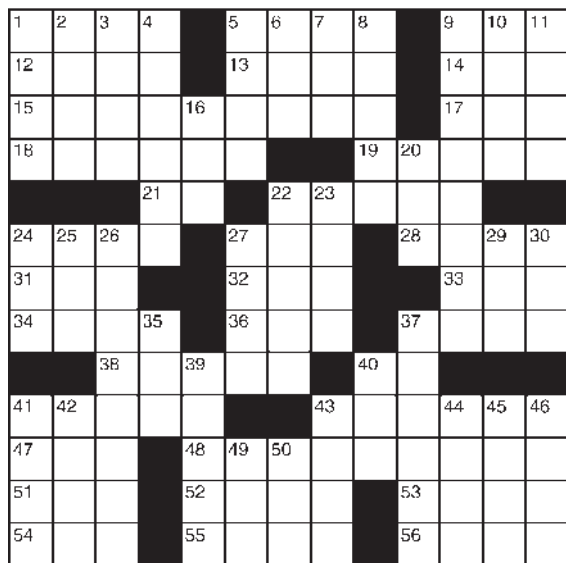
By Eugene Sheffer

- ACROSS**
- 1 Horse's foot
- 5 Impudent
- 9 Unruly bunch
- 12 "Born Free" lioness
- 13 Water pitcher
- 14 Rage
- 15 Years : decades :: centuries : —
- 17 Michele of "Glee"
- 18 Combined resources
- 19 Honeydew, e.g.
- 21 On the other hand
- 22 Hindu pundit
- 24 Describe
- 27 Chowd down
- 28 "Do — others ..."
- 31 Schuss
- 32 Third letter
- 33 Very long time
- 34 Farmer's home?
- DOWN**
- 1 Rope fiber
- 2 Hodge-podge
- 3 Norway's capital
- 4 Leno's successor
- 5 Flex
- 6 Possess
- 7 Wahine's bestowal
- 8 Pulitzer Prize category
- 9 Hatmaker
- 10 Sandwich
- 11 Rowan Atkinson role
- 16 Always, in verse
- 20 Ostrich's cousin
- 22 Oktoberfest souvenir
- 23 Do gardening
- 24 "Acid"
- 25 Eisenhower
- 26 Very large number to Brits
- 27 Rue the run
- 29 Heavy weight
- 30 "The loneliest number"
- 35 Track circuit
- 37 Brought out
- 39 Minion of Satan
- 40 Black bird
- 41 Fed agt
- 42 Lasso
- 43 Troubles
- 44 Modify fully
- 45 Make — meet
- 46 Eyelid problem
- 49 "— got it!"
- 50 Legislation

Solution time: 25 mins.



Yesterday's answer 1-2



STUMPED?

For answers to today's crossword, call 1-800-226-5955! 99¢ per minute, touch-tone/rotary phones. (18+ only.) A King Features service, NYC.

CELEBRITIES BORN ON THIS DAY: Eli Manning, 33; Danica McKellar, 39; Mel Gibson, 58; Victoria Principal, 64.

Happy Birthday: Searching for progressive and unique ways to enhance your life and bring about the change you feel you need in order to explore new avenues can be a risky venture. As long as you don't let impulse take over and you go through the steps required to build a solid base, the sky is the limit. Your numbers are 2, 12, 18, 23, 34, 45, 47.

ARIES (March 21-April 19): Make a difference. Don't limit what you can do. Someone you deal with will detect your uneasiness. Keep your distance from anyone trying to push or coerce you into something you feel uncertain about. Protect your reputation and your position. ★★

TAURUS (April 20-May 20): Set your priorities and talk about your plans. Taking a trip or spending time with someone you want to do more with will bring you closer together. A partnership will bring you greater stability as well as opportunities. Don't hold back. ★★

GEMINI (May 21-June 20): Check out your options and what you need to do, get or learn in order to move in a direction that is better suited to your skills and education. Use an emotional situation to help you maneuver into a position of interest. ★★

CANCER (June 21-July 22): Embrace the upcoming year with hope, desire and a little persistence. Know what you want and don't be afraid to ask. Face an encounter with someone of influence in your life with a plan and let your persuasive personality lead the way. ★★

LEO (July 23-Aug. 22): Emotions will surface if someone tries to unload unwanted responsibilities on you. Before responding negatively, consider how you can manipulate the situation to work for you professionally, financially or physically. Where there is a will, there is a way. ★★

VIRGO (Aug. 23-Sept. 22): Get involved in something that enables you to offer more skills or services. The more you interact with others, the easier it will be for you to reach for the stars. End your day on a romantic note. ★★

LIBRA (Sept. 23-Oct. 22): Concentrate on whatever you can do to improve your status quo or your attitude regarding life, love and what you want to do next. A change is overdue, but old conditions must be ended before new ones can be put into play. ★★

SCORPIO (Oct. 23-Nov. 21): Travel or sign up for a course that will help improve your quality of life or your professional status. Don't let anyone stand between you and your goals. An unexpected change will turn out to be beneficial. Let things unfold naturally. ★★

SAGITTARIUS (Nov. 22-Dec. 21): Invite change at home and at work. Start the year off by embracing life and what you want to achieve. Not everyone will be happy with your decisions, but in the end, you are the one in charge of your own happiness. ★★

EUGENIA LAST

THE LAST WORD IN ASTROLOGY

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CAPRICORN (Dec. 22-Jan. 19): Look at where you are and where you want to go. Set your goals and don't stop until you reach your destination. Your stamina, discipline and fair play will lead to victory. Don't let someone's erratic behavior slow you down. ★★



AQUARIUS (Jan. 20-Feb. 18): Emotions will surface, causing overdue changes to take place. It won't be smooth sailing, but it will be an adventure that should help you discover new options and a chance to make improvements to your life. Take a deep breath and continue. ★★



PISCES (Feb. 19-March 20): Enjoy sharing with friends or your lover. Make suggestions and plans for the future. Use your insight and propose something special that can help you explore and expand new interests. Participation will be key. Make love a priority. ★★

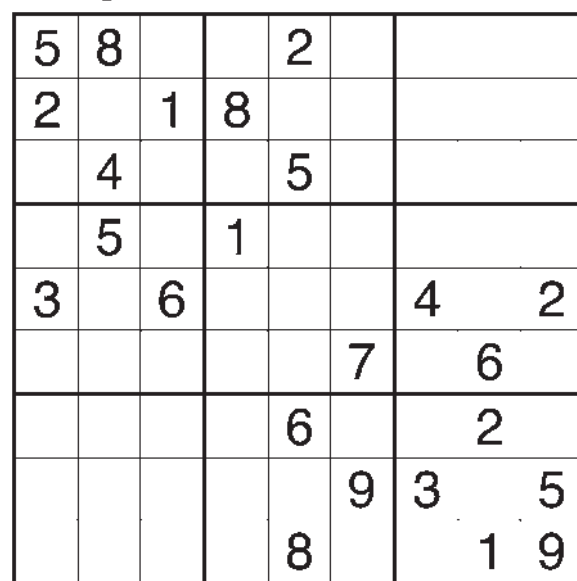
Birthday Baby: You are inventive, industrious and adventuresome. You are brave and powerful.

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SUDOKU

Conceptis Sudoku

By Dave Green

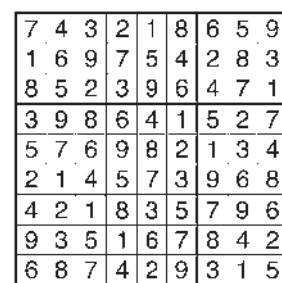


Difficulty Level ★★

1/02

Sudoku is a number-placing puzzle based on a 9x9 grid with several given numbers. The object is to place the numbers 1 to 9 in the empty squares so that each row, each column and each 3x3 box contains the same number only once. The difficulty level of the Conceptis Sudoku increases from Monday to Saturday.

Yesterday's SUDOKU Answer



Difficulty Level ★★

1/0

WONDERWORD

By DAVID OUELLET

HOW TO PLAY: All the words listed below appear in the puzzle — horizontally, vertically, diagonally, even backward. Find them and CIRCLE THEIR LETTERS ONLY. DO NOT CIRCLE THE WORD. The leftover letters spell the Wonderword.

EXPLORING ANTARCTICA'S ICE CAVES

Solution: 7 letters



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Acidity, Active, Altitude, Base, Biosphere, Bright, Camera, Camp, Cold, Continent, Crater, Greavasses, Crystals, Darkness, Delta, Dome, Entrances, Erupt, Explorers, Freeze, Glacier, Island, Lake, Lava, Mask, Mountains, Mt. Erebus, Passages, Ross, Shed, Silence, Slopes, Snow, Steam, Streams, Suit, Temperatures, Thermos, Towers, Water, Winds

Yesterday's Answer: Helion

To purchase the **WONDERWORD MILLENNIUM SERIES** #1, call 1-800-642-8480. Or on line at: wonderword.universaljclick.com. (Contains 100 puzzles.)

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Applications can be obtained and submitted at L&T Group of Companies, Ltd. Human Resources Office located on the 2nd Floor, JP Center Building at Beach Road, Garapan. Salaries will commensurate with qualifications and experience. To be considered, applications must be submitted no later than 5:00pm, Tuesday, January 14, 2014.

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**COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY
PROCUREMENT, DELIVERY AND INSTALLATION
OF TWO (2) ENERGY EFFICIENT COMMERCIAL
AIR CONDITIONING CONDENSING UNITS
PROJECT NO. CPA-RFP-005-14**

REQUEST FOR PROPOSALS

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) invites submission of proposals from qualified individuals or firms to furnish, deliver, and install two (2) Energy Efficient Commercial Air Conditioning Condensing Units at the Port of Saipan, Seaport Building.

The proposal package will be available at the Office of the Executive Director, Commonwealth Ports Authority, Saipan International Airport, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building beginning December 13, 2013.

All proposals shall be sealed and marked on the cover package outside as follows: "Proposal for Procurement, Delivery of Two (2) Energy Efficient Commercial Air Conditioning Condensing Units, Project no. CPA-RFP-005-14.

One (1) original and four (4) copies of the proposal must be submitted no later than 4:00 p.m., LOCAL TIME, January 10, 2014, to the Office of the Executive Director, 2nd Floor of the Arrival Building, Saipan International Airport. Proposals submitted by facsimile transmission will not be accepted. Any proposals received after the proposal deadline shall be returned to the proposer unopened.

The Commonwealth Ports Authority (CPA) reserves the right to reject any or all proposals submitted for; (a) any of the reasons set forth in this Request for Proposals; (b) any of the reasons set forth in the CPA Procurement Rules and Regulations regarding rejection or cancellation; or (c) sufficient justification exists that awarding the procurement project would not be in the best interest of CPA. The CPA further reserves that right to waive any defects in said proposals if in its sole opinion to do so would be in CPA's best interest.

All proposals shall become the property of the Commonwealth Ports Authority. This Request for Proposals shall be executed as per the CPA Procurement Regulations.

FOR THE COMMONWEALTH PORTS AUTHORITY

/s/ MARYANN Q. LIZAMA
Executive Director

BEFORE THE COMMONWEALTH PUBLIC UTILITIES COMMISSION

COMMONWEALTH UTILITIES CORPORATION RATE PETITION

DOCKET 13-01

PUBLIC NOTICE

Public notice is given by the Commonwealth Public Utilities Commission that the December 24, 2013 report of its hearing examiner in the above docket is available for public inspection and comment.

Pursuant to Public Law 15-35 § 8431(d) any interested person may submit written comments in relation to the report within ten (10) days following the date it is made available to the public. Persons interested in reviewing the report may obtain a copy by calling Ms. Lillian Tenorio, Esq., who serves as counsel to the Commission's regulatory consultant, at 670-234-7850. A copy of the report is also available for inspection on CUC's website at www.cucgov.org.

After the expiration of the ten day comment period, the Commission will notice and schedule a business meeting at which the report will be considered.

Questions about this notice can be referred to Ms. Lillian Tenorio, Esq., at 670-234-7850.

January 3, 2014.

Job Vacancy Announcement

Strategic Gaming Solutions, Inc. has immediate job openings for the following positions:

Floor Attendant (3)
Position Summary: Responsible for ensuring that the gaming machines floor operate smoothly and for providing a high degree of courteous service to guests during their entertainment experience. Assist the Gaming Floor Supervisor in maintaining the highest standards of efficiency, security and customer satisfaction.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a gaming floor attendant or game room customer service or any combination of experience, education and/or training where gaming operations or gaming floor attendant skills are demonstrated or willing to undergo in-house training. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Cashier (3)
Position Summary: Conduct financial transactions for patrons/guests. Exchange coins, tokens, and chips for patrons' money. Issue payoffs and obtain customer's signature on receipt. Count funds and reconcile daily summaries of transactions to balance books. Convert gaming checks, coupons, tokens, or coins to currency for gaming patrons. Maintain cage security. Maintain confidentiality of customers' transactions. Use cash register or computer to record transactions.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a game room cashier or casino cash desk operations or any combination of experience, education and/or training where financial transactions for patrons/guest skills are demonstrated or willing to undergo in-house training. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Surveillance Operator
Position Summary: Responsible for video observation of all aspects of the e-gaming/digital lounge operation and the reporting of all irregular or illegal activities.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a surveillance operator or investigator or any combination of experience, education and/or training in video surveillance and/or related investigations into all casino/e-gaming lounge related activities including accounting, gaming machines, change booths, cashiering operations, count rooms, or wagering areas. Knowledge of gaming internal control procedures, CCTV and security management systems. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Security Officer
Position Summary: Responsible for the safety and well being of guests and fellow employees and protection of company property. Regularly provides escorts of money and persons in money-handling positions. Patrols all sections of property to identify safety hazards and breaks in security. Enforces all company policies and procedures. Maintains and enforces internal security regulations.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 years work experience as a security or police officer or investigator or any combination of experience, education and/or training in video surveillance and/or related investigations into all casino/e-gaming lounge related activities including accounting, gaming machines, change booths, cashiering operations, count rooms, or wagering areas. Knowledge of gaming internal control procedures, CCTV and security management systems. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Bartender
Position Summary: Responsible for operating and maintaining the e-gaming/digital lounge bar during the shift ensuring that the bar, equipment and stock is maintained and cleaned. Ensure that all stock levels are adequate. Mix and serve drinks to patrons, directly or through waitstaff
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 1 year work experience as a bartender. Must be energetic with an excellent track record in hospitality and who thrives in a fast-paced service environment. Must have in depth knowledge about wines, spirits, cocktails and other drink ingredients. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Waiter – Waitress (3)
Position Summary: Take orders and serve food and beverages to customers at tables and all other areas of the e-gaming/digital lounges. Regularly check customers to ensure they are enjoying their food and beverages and take action to correct any problems. Prepare checks or receipts that itemize and total meals/beverages costs.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 1 year work experience as a waiter/waitress. Must be energetic with an excellent track record in hospitality and who thrives in a fast-paced service environment. Ability to communicate effectively with customers, guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Guest Services/Marketing Supervisor (1)
Position Summary: Responsible for development and execution of marketing, budget and promotional campaigns. Structure and maintain effective VIP and guest services department. Ensure full support is given to junkets, premium players and VIP's visiting the e-gaming/digital lounge. Market the e-gaming/digital lounge internationally and develop and maintain customer contacts in target markets. Ensure effective liaison between guest services and other departments. Identify, develop, or evaluate marketing strategy, based on knowledge of establishment objectives, market characteristics and other relevant factors. Formulate, direct as well as coordinate marketing activities plus policies to promote products and services, working with advertising promotion managers.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 2 year experience working in a casino guest services department as a guest service/marketing supervisor or e-gaming clubs promoting gaming entertainment and services. Must be energetic with an excellent track record in hospitality and who thrives in a fast-paced service environment. Must have in depth knowledge about marketing strategies. Ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form, Ability to handle multiple tasks. Must demonstrate true passion to serve guests. Must have strong team work skills. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Compensation: All positions will be filled and paid at a rate commensurate with qualification, work experience, and ability to perform.

Job Location: Saipan and at all offices or e-gaming/digital gaming lounges of the corporation.

Application: Applications may be obtained from the HR Office of Mita Travel, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan. The detailed job description & KSA and benefits for each position is available for review by applicants. Deadline for submission of completed applications is January 8, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Job Vacancy Announcement

Strategic Gaming Solutions, Inc. has immediate job openings for the following positions:

General Manager, Electronic Gaming (1)
Position Summary: Plan, direct and co-ordinate the operations of a business, division, department or operating unit of Strategic Gaming Solutions, Inc. Plan and maintain systems and procedures for operating efficiency. Manage staff for optimum performance. Ensure compliance with all applicable CNMI and Federal laws and adherence to and maintenance of policy of confidentiality within the gaming operation; and to produce maximum revenue levels.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent and a certificate in gaming operations or management plus 13 years of successful work experience in one or more gaming operations, 7 years of which must be as a gaming table or gaming machine manager; ability to communicate effectively with guests, team members and management in both written and verbal form and the ability to handle multiple tasks; demonstrated experience and ability to manage all table games and must be computer literate. Knowledge and experience in strategic planning; marketing, brand reinforcement; networking, stakeholder communication; financial management, forecasting, budgeting; team building and development; staff management, mentoring and motivation; organizational, coordination and time management; complete all documentation accurately in accordance with standards and applicable local and federal laws. Ability to work any shift or hours; must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends; highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent and leadership skills. Ability to work any shift or hours.

Human Resources Officer (1)
Position Summary: Responsible for planning, development, and implementation of all HR policies, procedures, standards, systems and program; provide supervision and direction as well as coordinate all activities of the Human Resources Office to ensure that all established goals are achieved; Manages and administers a specialized corporate-wide human resource activity such as recruitment, selection and retention, employee relations, compensation, training and development, organizational development, classification, training or benefits and occupational safety. Responsible for major program administration, policy and procedure formulation and implementation involving in-depth communication and analysis.
Position Requirement: Degree or diploma in human resources management, business administration, public administration or equivalent plus 3 years generalist human resources experience or professional level experience in human resources with at least two years supervisory experience or any equivalent combination of experience, education and/or training where personnel skills and managing people are demonstrated; knowledge of the principles and practices of HR management; knowledge of business principles; knowledge of HR relevant legislation and regulations; knowledge of relevant software; knowledge and experience in strategic planning, workforce planning, performance management and HR alignment; highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills; computer literate.

Finance Manager (1)
Position Summary: Responsible for the entire function and activities of the Finance Department, for applying accounting principles and procedures to analyze financial information, forecast revenue and expenditures, preparing accurate and timely financial reports and statements and ensuring appropriate accounting control procedures.
Position Requirement: Bachelor's degree in Accounting, Business Administration or related area; or four to six years related experience and/or training; or an equivalent combination of education and experience. Minimum of three (3) years experience in accounting, in management of financial systems and budgets, financial reporting, financial data analysis and forecasting, auditing, taxation and providing financial advice, preferably in the gaming industry, with progressive supervisory/managerial experience required. Experience as a financial manager who has led a focused, business oriented team.. Good oral and written communication skills. Must be a practical, logical and decisive individual with the ability to get the job done. Must be extremely numbers-oriented and computer-literate, with superior spreadsheet skills; proficiency in accounting and Excel software highly preferred.

Executive Assistant (1)
Position Summary: Perform all and/or any combination of clerical duties requiring knowledge of systems, practices, or procedures and use of all types office machines; maintain and control all aspects relating to club management systems; supervise and participate in the Electronic Gaming Machine soft count and the issuing and collection of cash floats to the Bar; and carry out regular audits of Food and Beverage stocks as requested by the Finance Manager.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 3 years work experience in responsible office management providing high level support; be able to communicate clearly in and possess a good command of verbal and written English. Knowledge of administrative and clerical procedures and systems such as word processing, managing files and records, stenography and transcription, designing forms, and other office procedures and terminology. Proficient computer skills and in-depth knowledge of relevant software such as MS Office Suite. Knowledge of standard office administrative practices and procedures. Must be willing to work shifts, evenings, holidays, and weekends. Highly motivated, organized, outgoing, with excellent communication and leadership skills an advantage.

Shift Manager (3)
Position Summary: Responsible and accountable for the overall efficient and profitable operation of all operational areas of the e-gaming/digital gaming lounges of the corporation. Maintain with the support of all subordinate personnel the highest standards of efficiency, customer service and security, in accordance with the policies and procedures of the corporation. Assume the duties and authority of (Operational areas of the Club – Gaming, Bar, waiters/waitresses, security officers and dealers) the General Manager in his/her absence, and perform any other special duties as requested from time to time by the General Manager.
Position Requirement: Degree in business management or related field or any equivalent combination of experience, education and/or training where gaming operations or gaming management skills and managing people are demonstrated. Able to communicate clearly in and possess a good command of verbal and written English. A minimum of 3 years' experience in casino gaming / slots management/e-gaming machine/table games. Ability to work in a team. Must demonstrate the ability to supervise the activities of others.

Electronic Gaming Machine Technician (3)
Position Summary: Responsible for the efficient running of all electronic gaming machines, servrs and IT systems. Repair, service and maintain electronic gaming machines in order to minimize down time of machines which results in loss of revenue. Organize the activities of maintenance and technician contractors.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED, technical school plus a minimum of 3 years work experience as a slots or e-gaming machine technician in a casino or equivalent or any equivalent combination of experience, education and/or training in e-gaming machines repair, service, and maintenance skills can be demonstrated. Able to communicate clearly in and possess a good command of verbal and written English. Knowledge of various types of electronic gaming equipment used on casino floor and demonstrate the skills and ability to diagnose problems, take corrective action necessary, and ensure device is operational as quickly and efficiently as practical.

Gaming Floor Supervisor (2)
Position Summary: Supervise and organize the gaming floor, maintaining the highest standards of efficiency, security and customer satisfaction, in accordance with the procedures and policies of the corporation. Responsible and accountable for the overall efficient and profitable operation of all operational areas of the gaming floor through subordinate personnel. Assume the duties and authority of the Shift Manager in his/her absence, and perform any other special duties as requested from time to time by the General Manager.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 3 years successful work experience in slots or gaming club or lounge supervisory management or any equivalent combination of experience, education and/or training where personnel skills and managing people or managing gaming floor supervision or operation are demonstrated.

Guest Services Officer (2)
Position Summary: Responsible for ensuring the smooth operation of the guest services desk on a designated shift. Ensure full support is given to visiting junkets, premium players and VIP's visiting the e-gaming/digital lounge.
Position Requirement: High School graduate, GED or equivalent plus 3 years successful work experience as a guest services officer in a casino, slots or gaming club or lounge or any equivalent combination of experience, education and/or training where guests services skills are demonstrated. Able to communicate clearly in and possess a good command of verbal and written English. Excellent Public Speaking and communication skills. Must be computer literate with effective negotiating and problem solving skills.

Compensation: All positions will be filled and paid at a rate commensurate with qualification, work experience, and ability to perform.

Job Location: Saipan and at all offices or e-gaming/digital gaming lounges of the corporation.

Application: Applications may be obtained from the HR Office of Mita Travel, Beach Road, Garapan, Saipan. The detailed job description & KSA and benefits for each position is available for review by applicants. Deadline for submission of completed applications is January 7, 2014 at 6:00 p.m.

Sports rings out the year with some odd bounces

FRED LIEF
AP SPORTS WRITER

The story had all the elements of a Cold War thriller: a wealthy American businessman, Russian leadership at the highest levels, diplomatic intrigue and purloined jewels.

Regrettably, there was no romantic subplot. But if the movie rights on this are ever sold, that will be an easy addition to the script.

The mystery of Robert Kraft's wayward Super Bowl ring was one of many odd places sports wandered into in 2013:

A suspect in Vancouver's 2011 Stanley Cup riots was identified as a former Miss Congeniality beauty pageant winner; a top high school girls' basketball team in Iowa featured four sets of sisters; ski star Lindsey Vonn was called off a New York red carpet at a Lincoln Center fashion gathering for a random drug test.

The Detroit Tigers' Torii Hunter missed a game because of an Achilles tendon injury caused by wearing dress shoes that were too tight; New York Jets coach Rex Ryan ran with the bulls in Pamplona, his team unable to run with the Bears, Broncos and Bengals; and the world's oldest marathoner, Indian-born Fauju Singh, decided enough was enough and stopped running at 101.

"I will miss it," he said.

Kraft's saga begins in June in one of New York's finest hotels. The owner of the New England Patriots is speaking at a gala where he is being honored. He regales the guests by telling them how one of his Super Bowl rings wound up on display at the Kremlin.

Kraft says he was visiting St. Petersburg with a business delegation in 2005 when he was introduced to Vladimir Putin and showed the Russian president the diamond-encrusted ring.

"I put my hand out and he put it in his pocket," Kraft said, as quoted by the New York Post. "And three KGB guys got around him and walked out."

At the time, Kraft said it was a gift but would later say he wanted the ring back. The White House, he suggests, thought it best for him to say this was indeed a gift and not stir political relations.

Days later, the story shifts across the Atlantic. Putin is in London and his spokesman is asked about the Tale of the Ring. Dmitry Peskov tells The Associated Press he was there when Putin met Kraft. Peskov dismisses the entire episode as a matter better suited for a "detailed talk with psychoanalysts."

Or comedians.

Kraft spokesman Stacey James calls this an "anecdotal" story the owner plays for laughs. Putin soon weighs in dryly on this "complicated international problem." He says,



In this June 25, 2005 file photo, Russian President Vladimir Putin, right, shakes hands with New England Patriots owner Robert Kraft while holding Kraft's diamond-encrusted 2005 Super Bowl ring, as News Corp. Chairman Rupert Murdoch, center, looks on during a meeting of American business executives at the 18th century Konstantin Palace outside St. Petersburg, Russia. The mystery of Robert Kraft's wayward Super Bowl ring was one of many odd places sports wandered into in 2013.

in fact, he doesn't remember Kraft. But, Putin adds, if this ring is "so valuable," he's happy to make amends and order him some jewelry.

This was not the only puzzling intersection between sports and politics in 2013.

Dennis Rodman, of course, landed in the unlikely spot of North Korea. The former NBA star, for whom flamboyance is an understatement, was wine and dined during his mission of basketball diplomacy by North Korean leader Kim Jong Un. Rodman, who knows about winning titles with the Chicago Bulls, later seemed miffed he did not win the Nobel Peace Prize.

Also miffed was Chechen strongman Ramzan Kadyrov. During a Russian league football game he became incensed that the captain of Terek Grozny was ejected. Kadyrov grabbed a microphone and roared to the fans: "The ref's been bought off! You're an ass!" On reflection, he called his response "a cry from the soul."

New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg came in peace to a Knicks game last January at Madison Square Garden. A court-side waitress stopped by to take orders, although it's not clear if it was for the mayor. Stephen Jackson of the Spurs crashed into the waitress and left the game with a sprained ankle. Bloomberg shortly after was seen eating popcorn.

The law found some players

in curious spots, notably Kobe Bryant.

The Lakers' star became entangled in a lawsuit involving his mother. At issue was whether a New Jersey auction house could sell some of his memorabilia his mother offered for sale. The parties settled, but there was this entry in court papers: "Mom, I never told you that you could have the memorabilia," and Pamela Bryant responded, "Yes, but you never said you wanted it, either."

Florida University linebacker Antonio Morrison was charged under one of the more obscure laws on the books — barking at a police dog. According to authorities, Morrison was walking by an open window of a police car. He decided to bark at the dog; the dog decided to bark

back. A deputy arrested Morrison. The charges were dropped, and it was acknowledged a warning to the barking player would have been more appropriate.

Two Australian Rules football players thought they'd have some good fun. Josh Caddy and Billie Smedts donned ski masks and broke into a teammate's house. One problem: Caddy and Smedts were at the wrong address. Police, with guns drawn, soon arrested them.

Embarrassments, not just from pranks gone wrong, came in all forms.

The commissioner of Japanese baseball, Ryozi Kato, introduced a new, livelier ball. There was, however, an omission. He didn't notify the players. Kato apologized and said

he would have to "carefully reflect on my responsibility to the game."

A fourth-division Brazilian football club was tossed from the playoffs after its masseur jumped on the field. The masseur, Romildo da Silva, took his spot in the vacated goal and proceeded to make two key saves. Opposing players chased him off the field, and police arrested him for his own protection.

Nigerian football had its own mess. Two lower-league games that ended in scores of 79-0 and 67-0 were found to be fixed. Lifetime player bans and team suspensions followed. The Nigerian federation decried the games as a "mind-boggling show of shame."

Most athletes serve up boilerplate clichés in postgame com-

ments. But some reveal perhaps more than they should.

Consider mixed-martial arts fighter Nick Diaz. While discussing his loss in a title bout in Montreal, he talked about his financial situation.

"I just have to invest a little bit more, now that I have a little bit more money," he said. "You know what? I've never paid taxes in my life. I'm probably going to jail."

Tennis star Richard Gasquet took a deep philosophical turn after his five-set loss to Stanislas Wawrinka at the French Open. When asked to describe where the pain from the defeat hurt most, he said: "In the soul, for sure."

Sports promotions came in all sizes and tastes.

Kansas State lured fans to its women's basketball opener by giving away 300 pounds of bacon. The Florence Freedom, a Kentucky minor league baseball team, saw the Manti Te'o fictional girlfriend story as too good to pass up. It was offering a bobblehead of the "girlfriend." The boxes, however, would be empty. The minor league Lehigh Valley IronPigs enticed fans with a free funeral in a promotion the club said represented not outside-the-box thinking, but "inside the box."

Sometimes, in sports, it's all about luck. It sure didn't start out that way for Mark Mihal. With winter ending, the mortgage broker was looking forward to the year's first round of golf.

He was playing in Waterloo, Illinois, outside St. Louis, and doing well. But while he was considering his next shot from the fairway of the 14th hole he plunged into an 18-foot sinkhole. He was trapped in darkness and mud, and screaming. It took about 20 minutes before his friends could yank him out with a rope.

Mihal wound up with a busted shoulder but knows it could have been a lot worse. He has played this layout many times. Now he wonders if he'll be back.

"I love the course," he says. "But I would have a tough time walking down that hole again."

Sources: Smith reaches deal to coach Tampa Bay

TAMPA, Fla. (AP)—Former Chicago Bears coach Lovie Smith is set to take on the challenge of rebuilding the Tampa Bay Buccaneers.

Two people familiar with Smith's plans said Wednesday night that the coach has reached an agreement to fill the opening created by the firing of Greg Schiano following a 4-12 finish.

The people spoke to The Associated Press on the condition of anonymity because an official announcement hasn't been

made. One of the people also said that former Minnesota Vikings coach Leslie Frazier will be the Bucs' defensive coordinator.

The 55-year-old Smith will replace Schiano, fired Monday after going 11-21 in two seasons in Tampa Bay. Frazier also was fired Monday.

Smith was 81-63 in nine seasons with Chicago, leading the 2006 team to the Super Bowl where the Bears lost Indianapolis. He was fired a year ago after the Bears finished 10-6 and missed the playoffs for the fifth time in six seasons.

Smith was Tampa Bay's linebackers coach under Tony Dungy from 1996-2000, then spent three seasons as the St. Louis Rams' defensive coordinator on Mike Martz's staff.

Smith will take over a team that made strides on defense after acquiring cornerback Darrelle Revis and safety Dashon Goldson last spring, however the offense sputtered badly following the abrupt benching and subsequent release of quarterback Josh Freeman. With rookie Mike Glennon running the offense, Tampa Bay sank to last in the

NFL in passing and total yards per game.

One of Smith's first orders of business figures to be deciding if Glennon, who went 4-9 as a starter while throwing for 2,608 yards, 19 touchdowns and nine interceptions, showed enough to prove he's the team's quarterback of the future.

Tampa Bay, which lost its first eight games before going 4-4 over the second half of the season, will have the seventh pick in this year's draft and can use help in several areas, including defensive end, offensive line and wide receiver.

DeRozan scores 26 as Raptors beat Pacers, 95-82



TORONTO (AP)—DeMar DeRozan scored 26 points, Kyle Lowry had 13 points and a season-high 14 assists and the Toronto Raptors extended their season-best winning streak to four games, beating the Indiana Pacers 95-82 on Wednesday night.

Terrence Ross scored 18 points and Jonas Valanciunas had 13 points and nine rebounds as the Raptors (15-15) snapped Indiana's five-game winning streak and improved to .500 after 30 games for the first time since Jan. 6, 2010.

The Raptors have won eight of 10 games since Dec. 13, when the majority of the players acquired from Sacramento in the Rudy Gay deal made their Toronto debuts.

Roy Hibbert fouled out with 16 points and Paul George had 12 for the Pacers, who recorded a season-worst 23 turnovers. Indiana had won nine of its previous 12 meetings with Toronto, including four straight north of the border. Danny Granger scored 11 points for Indiana.

Hibbert picked up his fifth foul less than 90 seconds into the fourth quarter, and the Pacers couldn't hold a one-point lead without their big man. Greivis Vasquez hit a 3 on Toronto's next possession, giving the Raptors a 69-67 lead.

David West tied the score at

74-74 with a jump shot at 6:58, but Toronto answered with six straight points, four from DeRozan, to open an 80-74 lead at 5:23. West stopped the run by making one of two from the free throw line, but Lowry hit two free throws at the other end and, after Hibbert checked back in, DeRozan nailed a jumper to put Toronto up 84-75 with 4:22 left.

Hibbert fouled out with 3:25 left and Toronto scored five of the next seven points, two on a fast break layup by Lowry, to lead 91-79 with 2:00 remaining.

Ross and DeRozan both scored seven points in the first quarter while Lowry had five points and seven assists as the Raptors led 26-18 after one. Hibbert scored 10 of Indiana's points in the quarter.

Toronto led 32-23 with 7:55 left in the second quarter, but Granger scored seven points as the Pacers closed the half with a 21-8 run to take a 44-40 lead. The Raptors missed nine of 15 field goal attempts in the second.

Toronto battled back in the third, tying the score at 63 on a dunk by Tyler Hansbrough with 1:08 left. After a turnover by George, Raptors guard John Salmons hit a 3, capping a 9-0 run to end the quarter and putting Toronto up 66-63.

Clippers 112, Bobcats 85

In Los Angeles, Blake Griffin



Toronto Raptors' DeMar DeRozan scores against the New York Knicks during first-half NBA basketball game action in Toronto, Saturday, Dec. 28, 2013

scored 13 of his 31 points in the final 7:05 and Jared Dudley got 11 of his 20 points in the third quarter, leading the Clippers to victory over the Bobcats.

Dudley faced his second former team in two games, making seven of 10 shots against the club that selected him with their first pick in the 2007 NBA draft and traded him to Phoenix after one season. He had nine points against the Suns on Monday in the Clippers' 107-88 loss.

Chris Paul had 17 points and

14 assists for the Clippers, who beat the Bobcats for the sixth straight time and sent them to their 17th straight road loss against Western Conference opponents.

Al Jefferson and Kemba Walker each scored 14 points for the Bobcats, whose previous six losses all were decided by five points or fewer.

76ers 114, Nuggets 102

In Denver, Evan Turner scored 23 points and Thaddeus Young

added 17, helping the 76ers beat the slumping Nuggets.

The Sixers had seven different players score in double figures en route to their second straight win away from home. Philadelphia halted a 13-game road losing streak in Los Angeles against the Lakers over the weekend.

J.J. Hickson had 19 points and 11 rebounds for the Nuggets, who dropped their eighth game in a row. It's the team's longest skid since losing the final eight games of the 2002-03 season.

Denver also has lost some of its home-court mystique under first-year coach Brian Shaw, losing a fifth straight at the Pepsi Center. The Nuggets were a franchise-best 38-3 at home last season.

Mavericks 87, Wizards 78

In Washington, Monta Ellis scored 23 points and Vince Carter had 13 as the Mavericks held the Wizards scoreless for more than four minutes late in the fourth quarter.

The Wizards led 74-70 with 4:58 to play, but the Mavericks scored nine straight points on a 3-pointer by Carter, a hook shot by Brandan Wright, two free throws by Carter and a jumper by Ellis.

Washington didn't score again until John Wall, who led the Wizards with 22 points,

made two free throws with 46 seconds to play.

Trevor Booker had 10 points and a career-high 19 rebounds for Washington.

It was Dallas' fourth straight win on the road and their eighth straight over the Wizards (14-15), who failed in their attempt to rise above .500 for the first time since Oct. 31, 2009.

Timberwolves 124, Pelicans 112

In Minneapolis, Nikola Pekovic had 22 points and seven rebounds and the Timberwolves led by as many as 30 points in cruising to the victory.

Kevin Love had 21 points and six rebounds and Ricky Rubio had 14 points, nine assists, eight rebounds and three steals for the Timberwolves. Minnesota shot 55.7 percent, attempted 35 free throws and forced a season-high 18 turnovers from the Pelicans.

Ryan Anderson had 25 points and Tyreke Evans added 16 points and seven boards for New Orleans. Eric Gordon returned from a three-game absence because of a bruised hip, but struggled with 12 points on 5-for-12 shooting.

Kevin Martin scored 20 points and reserve J.J. Barea had 17 to help the Wolves (16-16) to a needed win over New Orleans (14-16) in the jockeying for position in the tough Western Conference.

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SAIPAN 234-RENT



Pacquiao thanks God, fans for successful ring comeback

By AQUILES Z. ZONIO
Inquirer Mindanao

GENERAL SANTOS CITY, Philippines—World boxing eight-division champion Manny Pacquiao credited his diehard fans all over the world for his successful ring comeback in November against Mexican-American slugger Brandon “Bambam” Rios.

“Their undying prayers and support served as inspiration to me. That’s why I did my best to bounce back from a knockout loss last year,” Pacquiao told the Inquirer in a mobile phone interview.



During the 5th Annual “On The Ropes” Boxing Awards, Pacquiao bagged the “Comeback Fighter of the Year” plum for his methodical conquest of Rios.

“I owe my success to God, family and multitude of fans around the world. God and family give me strength. Fans serve as motivation for me during rigorous training. I always strive hard to win so as not to disappoint them,” Pac-



Manny Pacquiao taught Mexican-American slugger Brandon “Bambam” Rios a boxing lesson by dominating the fight from the opening bell to the finish, winning almost every round of the classic 12-round ring duel held in Macau, China.

quiao said.

The Filipino ring icon also thanked OTR for choosing him as Comeback Fighter of the Year.

In choosing Pacquiao, OTR Boxing Radio stated in its website, “When it comes

to this award there was one name that stood far above the rest. Coming off a 6th round KO defeat at the hands of Juan Manuel Marquez, many wondered if Manny Pacquiao would ever be the same fighter again. Once his return was an-

nounced, and that he would be facing Brandon Rios, some thought the match up could be dangerous and the wrong type of fight for Pacquiao’s return.”

On Nov. 26, Pacquiao taught Rios a boxing lesson by dominating the fight from the

opening bell to the finish, winning almost every round of the classic 12-round ring duel held in Macau, China.

OTR further said: “He (Pacquiao) proved that he was not only back, but also still a force

to be reckoned with in the welterweight division.”

The Pinoy ring sensation said the award will serve as added inspiration for him as he tries to earn more victories in his succeeding ring exploits.

TSUNAMI

From Page 32

10 100m backstroke.

In the girls 11 to 12, Tsunami Saipan’s Miku Tammy finished way ahead of Guam’s Leilani Koiwa, as the former logged 1:18.37 against the latter’s 1:26.49. Completing the Top 3 was Guam’s Samantha Hon (1:29.36). Nine others participated in the race. In the boys division, Tsunami Guam had a 1-2 finish with Caleb White (1:30.47) and Jimi Hendrix (1:32:32) edging Tsunami Saipan’s Mark Maestro (1:32.70).

The two participating clubs also split top honors in the 13 to 14 age group with Tsunami Saipan’s Kaito Yanai prevailing in the boys race with his 1:14.82 and Tsunami Guam’s Hanna White posting 1:16.58 to lead the girls division. White

stunned Tsunami Saipan’s Angel De Jesus (1:21.79) and teammate Sahvay Limtiaco (1:21.99), while Yanai won over Tsunami Guam’s Kai Aricayos (1:17.64) and younger brother Hiroto (1:21.83).

For the boys over 15 age group, Tsunami Saipan’s Kensuke Kimura took first place after submitting 1:03.53. He topped six Tsunami Guam swimmers and teammate Takumi Sugie (1:14.42). In the girls division, Misaki Iijima had 1:07.74 to win against her four teammates and Tsunami Saipan’s Daima Rivera (1:40.01).

Kimura and Iijima also shared top honors in the 50m breaststroke. Kimura timed in at 31.74 seconds) to place ahead of Guam’s Soujyu Usui (33.16) and Jagger Stephens (34.34). Misaki completed the race in 38.48 seconds, while fellow Tsunami Guam swimmers Ema

Rione and Allyson Chiu tied for second after tallying similar times of 41.37 seconds.

In the 13 to 14 age group, De Jesus avenged her loss to White after posting the fastest time (41.17 seconds) in the field. White (43.72) settled for third behind teammate Rosalyn Mikel (42.85).

In the 11 to 12 age group, Tsunami Guam finally made a sweep with Reina Ross and Jimi Hendrix winning after checking in at 43.99 seconds and 43.06 seconds, respectively. Tammy fell to third place with her 45.91 seconds, while Maestro finished fourth after recording 50.69 seconds.

In the 9 to 10 division, Gauran and Ryuto Yanai dominated their foes anew. Gauran tapped the block at the 50.18-second mark to place ahead of Tsunami Guam’s Roxanne Mikel (51.93 seconds) and Ivory

Howat (52.32). In the boys race, Ryuto timed in at 46.60 seconds to edge Aricayos (46.94) and Chuckie White (50.90).

Risa Hendrix foiled Tsunami Saipan’s bid for another sweep in the U8 age group as she clocked in at 53.66 seconds and won over Nanaka Watanabe (55.33 seconds). Ashley Dangol rounded out the Top 3 after logging 1:04.15. In the boys race, Deleon Guerrero (1:02.54) got the first place finish versus Riki Watanabe (1:02.92) and Xu (1:03.40).

Times in the virtual meet were not considered for NMI records, but Tsunami Saipan coach Hiro Kimura said they are crucial in determining the improvement of their swimmers. Kimura added that they will have another virtual meet next month.

“We are inviting players to come and check our brand new golf carts and enjoy going around and playing at our course,” the COP operations manager said.

share what they would learn at the camp once they return to the CNMI. Applications and requirements are due to Jan. 31 at 5pm and can be submitted via email at mwhite@saipan.com.

The Turkish Basketball Organized-camp will be held in connection with the 2014 FIBA World Championship (for women), which will run from Sept. 27 to Oct. 5 in Istanbul and Ankara. TBF will select the participants and shoulder all cost of the trip.

For more information, contact BANMI secretary/treasurer Michael White at 234-6547. *(Roselyn B. Monroyo)*

COP

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golf carts and opening of the renovated rooms are part of the different phases of devel-

opment at COP, according to Seo. Also undergoing renovation is the main building, while the golf course itself will also have a major facelift and more equipment at the 18-

hole course will either be replaced or improved.

Seo added at least 30 more brand new golf carts are coming, allowing COP top cater to more players.

BANMI

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event, which was previously held in Palau in 2010. In the boys division, the Commonwealth cagers finished sixth.

Jose Tumaquip, Keoni Chariton, Quincy Johnson, Pete Iguel, Dan Barcinas, James Lee, Jeremy Winkfield, Tim Quan, Jack Lizama, Peter Mendiolo, Robert Naraja, Joe Villacrusis, and Jericho Cruz were the members of the CNMI National Team that played in Palau. The women’s squad was composed of captain Connie Camacho, Lia Rangamar, Lena Guzman,

Jeralyn Castillo, Ira Palero, Lalaine Pagarao, Jenequa Benavente, Yvonne Bennett, Jamie Mendoza, Jacque Wonenberg, Lily Williams, and Dion Diaz.

Cage camp in Turkey

In related news, BANMI is seeking individuals who will represent the CNMI to a basketball camp in Istanbul Turkey in August this year.

BANMI is allotted three slots (one male and one female and one coach) on the camp. Interested male and female players must be 14 years old by Aug. 10, 2014 and no older than 14 on that date. The coach must be

in the 35 and under age group (on that date).

Applicants should be U.S. citizens and CNMI residents and submit a one-sentence statement (for players) answering the question “why do you love basketball?” and a 50-word or less statement (for the coach) on the question “what do you hope to gain by participating in the camp?”

All applicants are also required to provide BANMI a brief summary of their playing/coach experience and submit a statement (100 word or less) on what it would mean for them to join the camp and how will they

TRIBUNE SPORTS SCORES

NBA STANDINGS					NBA LEADERS					
EASTERN CONFERENCE					Scoring					
Atlantic Division						G	FG	FT	PTS	AVG
	W	L	Pct	GB	Durant, OKC	31	288	255	892	28.8
					Love, MIN	31	271	197	815	26.3
Toronto	15	15	.500	—	Anthony, NYK	27	251	167	709	26.3
Boston	13	18	.419	2½	James, MIA	30	279	162	764	25.5
Brooklyn	10	21	.323	5½	Harden, HOU	28	202	212	671	24.0
Philadelphia	10	21	.323	5½	Aldridge, POR	32	315	124	754	23.6
New York	9	21	.300	6	George, IND	31	249	150	727	23.5
					Curry, GOL	30	239	114	688	22.9
					Cousins, SAC	29	242	175	659	22.7
					Irving, CLE	31	253	127	689	22.2
					Griffin, LAC	34	285	170	747	22.0
					Afflalo, ORL	30	229	128	651	21.7
					Lillard, POR	32	213	155	683	21.3
					Westbrook, OKC	25	190	119	533	21.3
					DeRozan, TOR	30	223	151	628	20.9
					Nowitzki, DAL	31	238	127	648	20.9
					Ellis, DAL	32	237	155	653	20.4
					Wall, WAS	29	211	132	587	20.2
					Martin, MIN	30	195	148	596	19.9
					Gay, SAC	28	204	113	549	19.6
Southeast Division					FG Percentage					
						FG	FGA	PCT		
Miami	24	7	.774	—	Drummond, DET	193	315	.613		
Atlanta	18	14	.563	6½	Johnson, TOR	142	240	.592		
Washington	14	15	.483	9	James, MIA	279	473	.590		
Charlotte	14	19	.424	11	Howard, HOU	218	375	.581		
Orlando	10	21	.323	14	Hill, LAL	122	214	.570		
					Horford, ATL	238	420	.567		
					Lopez, Bro	129	229	.563		
					Diaw, SAN	130	237	.549		
					Lopez, POR	124	228	.544		
					Wade, MIA	182	335	.543		
Central Division					Rebounds					
						G	OFF	DEF	TOT	AVG
Indiana	25	6	.806	—	Love, MIN	31	112	305	417	13.5
Detroit	14	19	.424	12	Jordan, LAC	34	139	316	455	13.4
Chicago	12	18	.400	12½	Howard, HOU	34	121	325	446	13.1
Cleveland	10	21	.323	15	Drummond, DET	33	174	235	409	12.4
Milwaukee	7	24	.226	18	Cousins, SAC	29	88	241	329	11.3
					Vucevic, ORL	27	80	220	300	11.1
					Aldridge, POR	32	77	271	348	10.9
					Griffin, LAC	34	79	278	357	10.5
					Bogut, GOL	32	89	244	333	10.4
					Noah, CHI	29	100	191	291	10.0
WESTERN CONFERENCE					Assists					
Southwest Division						G	AST	AVG		
San Antonio	25	7	.781	—	Paul, LAC	33	374	11.3		
Houston	21	13	.618	5	Curry, GOL	30	285	9.5		
Dallas	19	13	.594	6	Wall, WAS	29	258	8.9		
New Orleans	14	16	.467	10	Jennings, DET	31	256	8.3		
Memphis	13	17	.433	11	Rubio, MIN	32	264	8.3		
					Holiday, NOR	30	246	8.2		
					Teague, ATL	32	261	8.2		
					Lawson, DEN	29	232	8.0		
					Blake, LAL	21	162	7.7		
					Lowry, TOR	30	223	7.4		
Northwest Division					BY THE ASSOCIATED PRESS					
Oklahoma City	25	6	.806	—						
Portland	25	7	.781	½						
Minnesota	16	16	.500	9½						
Denver	14	17	.452	11						
Utah	10	24	.294	16½						
Pacific Division										
L.A. Clippers	22	12	.647	—						
Phoenix	19	11	.633	1						
Golden State	20	13	.606	1½						
L.A. Lakers	13	19	.406	8						
Sacramento	10	20	.333	10						

32nd Annual Christmas Island Relay Part 2

PHOTOS BY ROSELYN B. MONROYO



DFS Galleria runners pose for a photo after completing the 32nd Annual Christmas Island Relay last Saturday.



Saipan Swim Club runners gather for a photo after finishing the 13.7-mile race.



Go For Broke runners head to the finish line.



Barefoot runner Chang Whan Jan competes in the solo race.



Lakas Tama members are a few steps away from finishing the race.



Ben Babauta, left, leads DFS 3 to the finish line.



Tanya's Soldiers head to the finish line.



SSC Trident runners slow down as they head to the finish line.



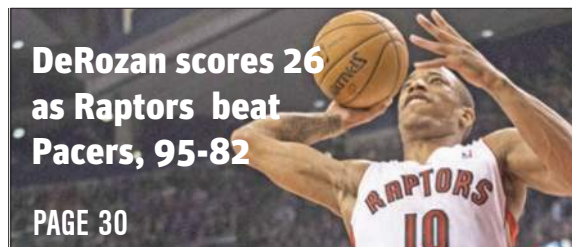
Pipit Ball is accompanied by her dog on the way to the finish line.



SSC president Robert Torres, second left, leads Wrecking Balls to the finish line.



Saipan Tribune Sports



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SAIPAN TRIBUNE

Tsunami Saipan swimmers excel anew

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Tsunami Swimming Center Saipan members made notable performance anew in a virtual meet with Tsunami Guam last month.

Tsunami Saipan took seven of the 10 first place finishes in the 100 backstroke and six in the 50m breaststroke event of the second virtual meet. The races were held on Dec. 19 (for Tsunami Saipan) at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool and Dec. 27 (for Tsunami Guam) at the Ysrael Complex Swimming Pool.

In the U8 100m backstroke, Tsunami Saipan had a sweep with Nanaka Watanabe and Hans Xu posting the fastest times in their divisions. Watanabe clocked in at 1:53.62 to lead Tsunami Saipan's Top 4 finish. Ashley Dangol came in at second with her 1:58.79, followed by fellow Tsunami Saipan bets Natsuki Nagata (2:16.78) and Kana Suzuki (2:20.04), Guam's Risa Hendrix (2:20.54), Mirai Komine (2:20.64), and Kokona Watanabe (2:24.24). Completing the finishers list were Saipan's Shaunalyn Babauta (2:31.52).

In the boys division, Xu logged 1:48:16 and was the

lone swimmer to break the two-minute barrier, beating teammate Anthony De Leon Guerrero (2:17.99). Arman Rechucher rounded out the Top 3 finish for Tsunami Saipan after submitting 2:26.18 and defeating Tsunami Guam's Ty Leon Guerrero (2:31.60) and Riki Watanabe (2:51.72).

Tsunami Saipan also registered the best time in the 9 to 10 age group with Sophia Gauran tallying 1:35.10 and Ryuto Yanai clocking in at 1:27.40. Gauran prevailed against teammate Aika Watanabe (1:42.71) and four other Tsunami Guam swimmers. In the boys division, Yanai and his two teammates made it to the podium, as Jun Tenorio's 1:38.19 and Kenshiro Yanai's 1:39.28 beat the 1:43.28 of Tsunami Guam's Chuckie White. Three other Tsunami Guam members and five Tsunami Saipan bets joined the boys 9 to

See TSUNAMI on Page 30



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Tsunami Saipan's Kensuke Kimura races in the 50m breaststroke event during a virtual meet at the Kan Pacific Swimming Pool last month.

COP has brand new golf carts



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

Gov. Eloy S. Inos, seventh from left, leads the unveiling ceremony for the 50 brand new golf carts of Coral Ocean Point Resort Club last Sunday.

By ROSELYN B. MONROYO
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REPORTER

Coral Ocean Point Resort Club unveiled its 50 brand new golf carts in a brief ceremony last Sunday at the parking lot of the Agingan Point golf course.

No less than Gov. Eloy S. Inos attended the unveiling ceremony, joining Department of Public Lands Secretary Pete A. Tenorio and Coral Ocean Point

Resort Club general manager Taeho Kim, operations manager Dennis Seo, and HR manager Bertha Leon Guerrero. Also witnessing the ceremony were three tourists, who were also the first customers of COP last weekend.

Inos said it is good to know that E-Land through Mariana Resort, Inc. is keeping

its promise of improving COP when the company took majority ownership of establishment in September last year.

"They are starting to deliver what were promised. We understand that it will take time for the redevelopment and expansion to take place considering the transportation of the



equipment needed on Saipan, so it's good that COP is moving forward," Inos said.

The governor also called on travel agents to check COP for its golf aficionado clients, as besides the brand new golf carts, the 80 rooms on the southern end of the property have been opened for reservation starting last Sunday.

The replacement of the old
See COP on Page 30

BANMI opens tryouts for Micro Games teams

Basketball Association of Northern Mariana Islands will start its series of tryouts for the 2014 Micronesian Games next week.

BANMI official Elias Rangamar said the first two days of the tryouts are set for Jan. 11 and 12 at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. The tryouts for the girls team will take place first from 10am to 12pm, while the boys will have their turn from 1pm to 4pm.

Interested players are advised to come out at the tryout in proper attire. BANMI also encouraged individuals playing both in the Marianas Interscholastic Sports Organization and Coalition of Private School Sports Association to join the tryouts.

This year's Micronesian Games will be held in Pohnpei from July 19 to 29. Guam is the defending champion in both the girls and boys divisions. The CNMI placed second in the girls division of the quadrennial
See BANMI on Page 30



ROSELYN B. MONROYO

High school players in action during last year's Rotary youth caging at the Gilbert C. Ada Gymnasium. BANMI is encouraging high school players to join the tryouts for the 2014 Micronesian Games.